

## Tell Me You Love Me by orphan\_account

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**Summary:**

“Billy?”

“Yes, princess.”

“Do you love someone?”

“No, I don’t. Love makes you weak, it gives other’s a chance to break you.”

# 1. The End

## Author's Note:

Hello, beautiful Harringrove shippers! Here's a shit ton of angst, you're welcome! I'd like to say a quick thank you to my friend @confettibites for editing this for me, thanks babe your the best! Now, please enjoy!

The same old song was stuck on replay in the background. The slow beat mixed with the chatter of all the people who were here made the atmosphere perfect for a night out. All types of people were around, each of them lost in their own world oblivious to one another. Steve could see a gay couple seated in the far corner of the bar, there was a boy around his age making out with a woman that could be the same age as his mother near the bathrooms and two girls getting down and dirty on the dance floor. He loved it here, in California Steve felt accepted.

Nobody ever came up to him. They all looked at him though, especially the boys and the older men but no one bothered to try and get a taste anymore, not after knowing who he was waiting for, not after figuring out who he was. Even a thousand miles away from home they still figured out who he was. Money is power his father used to tell him. Being this far from home and yet being recognized for his family influence in the business Steve can see what he meant with that.

Steve sat alone with a drink in his hand taking a sip every now and then enjoying the burn it created slipping down his throat. Every sip made it easier and him less conscious, it hurt less this way. He could blame it on the alcohol when this was over and not his own weakness, it was an easy way out and over this mess, over his own broken pieces, Steve knew it. He wasn't a fool, he knew it wasn't the alcohol intoxicating him rather something, no, someone else.

Lost in his fantasies he wonders, What if the raven-haired boy two tables away lifted his eyes up for once just for them to fall upon the beautiful blond girl, not more than a seat away from him? Will he

take her home? She looked like she could be his type, she was beautiful and seemed nice. Would they have a one night stand then become strangers? Or will they be more than that, maybe a couple? It could end up in a long-lasting friendship even, they didn't need to be lovers. Would they end up like him? Giving pieces of themselves to someone else? Someone who didn't deserve it? Steve hoped they wouldn't.

A sigh escaped Steve's thin pink lips. There are so many ways this night could go, millions and billions of scenarios that could come true. You could never know what's next, what the next moment holds. All you could do was to choose what you want and wait patiently for the results as you hold your breath out of excitement or fear. Because you can never be certain. It's a mystery and it's a beautiful one. You could live your life on the edge of danger, the top of a mountain, one wrong move and you'd come crashing down. It was thrilling and exciting to wonder what would happen, what's next.

The feeling of someone's eyes on him pulled Steve out of his thoughts. Brown met blue and the whole world seemed to fade away. Time stopped and Steve was stuck at that moment. It felt as if the earth stopped turning, the sun burned out and the sky fell down. All knowledge he ever had on how to breathe vanished and he was left breathless. The thought of suffocating and leaving this place sounded more appealing than what's yet to come. Now, with his mind clear, Steve could see the warning signs. The danger was clear, more vivid, with popping colors warning him. Every cell of his body was ready to run, to get out of here before he lost control again, of the fire and the burn.

Billy Hargrove, the heartbreaker. He was Steve's drug of choice. Even if it rose shame inside whatever Steve had left of himself, he couldn't deny the effect Billy had on him. He could get drunk on those sinful lips, lose his sanity in Billy's eyes and drown in pleasure with his body. Everything about Billy cried trouble, his eyes held fire within them and there was the scent of danger surrounding him. Maybe that was what made him addictive to Steve, that he knew he will get burned, hurt and broken. But sometimes fire was too pretty to avoid.

The way this night would go, played in the back of Steve's mind. It happened the same way so many times. The initial rush of adrenaline

was long gone, the beauty of his mystery almost lost. Billy never changed, he did this every time they met. Occasionally he called Steve for a one night stand but he left the next day, sometimes the same night and disappeared for a week or two, sometimes even a month, before he came back. The blue-eyed man didn't do relationships. No dating, holding hands and cuddles nothing but a quick fuck.

That was Billy's thing. He got interested in someone, he seduced them, got them into bed. He was just like a lion to his prey, he showed no mercy. Billy pampered people with sweet talk, cute pet names and in the right circumstances dirty talk. He made them feel special. In bed, he pleased them in every single way. He made them feel like a god, worshipping their body just for the night. Every sweet dream came to an end. When the sun touched the sky and the light wiped away the dark he was out before you could say "rise and shine". That pretty face of his is a sight your eyes won't fall upon ever again. Because all he was looking for was a body to keep his bed warm and his needs satisfied. Every time someone new, women and men of any kind and type, but never the same person twice.

In Steve's case, Billy keeps coming back again. Feeding him false hope, that they could be more. That he could be more, more than a body to give Billy pleasure or a pretty face to look at. Steve should be more, he deserved more but he was a fool that settled for less. Because that's the mistake that he has done. He fell, fell hard and fast in love. Steve Harrington was deeply in love with someone who didn't love him back. He was a fool, a naive boy searching in the real world for a happy fairytale. He wanted prince charming, the princess. He wanted the roses and the songs, he wanted love at first sight and a true love kiss. However, all he got was a soap opera, a Shakespeare tragedy, he got Billy Hargrove. It was so wrong to let his guard down, to let it continue, let it go as far as it went. When the signs were clear as the sun he was already in too deep, drunk of Billy, of his lies.

The thing was, Steve hadn't captured anyone's attention here because he never wanted to. He was hiding, he didn't want to be seen. Then Billy came and he saw him and pulled him out of the shadows. Billy gave him attention and everything was so new to Steve. He felt exposed to the world, he was the new boy in town and he tried to

stay away from everyone but Billy's attention on him attracted other people and soon he had eyes filled with lust and hunger following him everywhere. He was used to the attention honestly, to be wanted and lusted over but that was back home, in Hawkins where everyone knew everyone and no one was a stranger. He felt special being noticed by complete strangers, having the residence of California acknowledge his existence when they have all those other beautiful free souls walking around. This feeling of being special and important clouded his judgment. Next thing he knows he was in his bed naked with no one by his side. The only thing that accompanied him that day was his tears and the ruins of his broken heart.

Steve was so lost in his own world he didn't notice Billy approaching him. "Hey beautiful," Billy said. the closeness of his voice made Steve jump. A soft chuckle escapes Billy's full pink lips. Steves' heart started beating fast, a blush covered his cheeks. It annoyed him how Billy had such an effect on him, the control Billy has on him was scary. Just hearing his voice made him nervous and hot all over. He could feel himself losing control of his body leaving his wild emotions to take over.

"H-hey," Steve said. A smirk was painted on his lips, knowing exactly his effect on Steve Billy's eyes shone with mischief. Steve's warm eyes were fixed on his lips and for a moment he wondered, what Billy would look like with a smile? a genuine one from his heart. Steve would bet a million dollars on Billy's smile being a killer. Billy took a seat next to him, putting his hands on the inside of Steves' thighs, dangerously close.

This was bad, Steve couldn't think anymore. The hunger he had for Billy was far too strong to restrain. Like being hypnotized, he didn't know what he was doing when he moved closer to Billy, squeezing his hands between his thighs. Suddenly the place wasn't cool like it used to be. The air got hot and thick with desire Steve felt as if he was on fire, he was burning. He could feel his heart colliding with his ribcage from how fast it was beating.

Billy? his breathing was even, his muscles were relaxed and he looked completely unaffected by Steves' presence. He was composed and untroubled standing tall and mighty while Steve was a trembling mess under him from the simplest things. Steve found himself

fighting back the tears, his heart was heavy with frustration he wanted to scream till his voice was hoarse, till his throat felt raw. It wasn't fair, why couldn't he love someone who loved him back?

Billy came closer and closer to Steve till he could feel the ghost of Billy's lips on his ears. His hot breath fanning over his soft white milk skin. The closeness of Billy's body made goosebumps appear on his skin and sent shivers down his spine. "Ready to go princess?", Billy's deep voice whispered in his ears. Everything in Steve wanted to scream 'I can't do this anymore' but like a fool enchanted by Billy's spell, he obliged. "Yes", Steve said, his voice barely a whisper.

As soon as the word left his mouth Billy was on his feet, throwing money on the table paying for Steve's drink. He held his hand out for Steve to hold it. Shakingly Steve followed the offer, allowing Billy to help him to his feet as well as leading the way. Steve allowed himself to be dragged out of the building to the car. Like a gentleman, Billy opened the door for him and Steve wished he was a gentleman with his heart as well, not just with his body. They drove to Steve's place in silence. Steve lost himself to the passing street light.

104, there were 104 lights from the bar to his apartment. Every time they did this he would count them to stop his heart from beating so fast. Unfortunately, it didn't help today because Billy occasionally squeezes his thighs making Steve try hard to stop himself from moaning as he squirmed with every touch. The speed Billy was driving in was frightening but exciting, Steve could never fully get used to that. From the corner of his eyes, he caught a glance of Billy. His jaw clenched, muscles tense and his knuckles turned white from how hard he was holding the steering wheel. His tanned skin glowed every time they passed a street light. Billy was truly beautiful and Steve couldn't explain how someone like Billy could ever see something in someone as plain as Steve.

He took a moment to admire the sight in front of him, Billy's big hands and his arms muscle tense. Steve couldn't help letting his mind fantasize about the things those hands will soon do to his body. Thinking about the purple and yellow bruises they will leave on his skin, the marks that will stay as a reminder of his precious little mistake that he will never change. "It's rude to stare pretty boy.", Billy said smirking. Steve turned his head the other way fast,

blushing shamelessly. The laugh that escaped Billy's lips took Steve off guard. It was a short and awkward one as if it been ages since he last laughed and Billy was trying to remember how to do it again. Steve decided he liked it. He looked at Billy and was surprised to find a faint blush on his cheeks, he could barely see it but it was there.

"I like it," Steve said his voice so low and sweet.

"Huh?" Billy asked confused.

"You laughing - I like it, you should laugh more often," Steve said genuinely.

Something crossed Billy's eyes, an emotion Steve couldn't name. Billy cleared his throat and fixed his eyes on the road and Steve figured he wasn't supposed to see it so he let it slip and didn't question it. Talking wasn't something they did, what they had was complicated enough. Billy was taciturn, with thick big walls around him and Steve's quiet and insecure, too scared to ask. That's why the talking was left for their bodies, the touches, and the kisses. It was easier that way, Steve could close his eyes and fantasize about being in a real relationship with Billy from the way he touched him, with so much care and love, it brought tears in his eyes everytime they had sex. Steve can dream as wild as he wants when no words have been spoken.

Looking at the stars from the car window Steve asked himself 'what do I know about Billy?'. Shame, that's all he felt. He knew nothing about Billy other than he's a player, his last name is Hargrove and he drives a black Range Rover. But in Steve's defense, he knew other things like how he chews on his lips when he was nervous, that he was more confident in the crowd than when they were alone as if he was afraid his secrets would come falling down like a waterfall. He also liked to smoke after having sex as if it helped him to sleep, he was possessive, he didn't like people touching his things, his prey or maybe just Steve. Steve liked to think it's just him.

The car started slowing down then finally parked in front of Steve's complex building. Billy climbed out of the car and hurried to open Steve's door for him. As soon as he was out of the car Billy's hands were on him. His big rough hand was on his waist holding him

possessively. His fingers went under Steve's shirt and made contact with his skin, Steve forgot how to breathe for a second. Billy was pulling him closer to him. The heat radiating out of Billy's body into Steve's was too high, his body was melting, they were soldered together, they became one.

Looking at the building as they approached it Steve couldn't help but think 'here is where my heart keeps breaking'. It's all so funny because he used to be the one walking around breaking hearts, well, till he got a taste of his own medicine, till he loved someone for real. Nancy, she was his first love and she broke his heart, scarred his soul forever. His first love didn't love him and neither did his second. Maybe he shouldn't have played with those people's hearts. Maybe he should have been careful, karma was a bitch, he should have known.

Billy leaned down a little, burying his face in Steve's neck, he took a deep breath, inhaling his scent then kissing him there. His hot breath made the hair on the back of Steve's neck stand up. Billy was taller than him, it was something that Steve had always loved about them, the difference in almost everything, the height, age, personality, and appearance. While Billy was tall and masculine Steve was an inch shorter and petite, soft. Where Billy was in his 30s (he wouldn't tell Steve how old he was, he asked him to guess, Steve still hasn't got it right) Steve was 21, where Billy was a social person, Steve wasn't as social as he had been, he was shy. He loved it, loved the difference and the contradiction between them. Opposites attract, but sometimes they damage each other, sometimes the pull is too weak to hold a powerful emotion such as love. A feeling of a hand around his heart washes over him, he felt it, it was closing in, squeezing hard till his heart was about to burst. It was terrifying waiting for the explosion, for his heart to pop and his emotions, his feelings to break free.

Steve leaned into Billy more as they walked, with every step he told himself 'you deserve better', 'you are worth so much more' and 'have some pride and self-worth'. It was true, Steve really believed it, maybe he didn't deserve better than when he was young and stupid but he did now. He was a changed person, a better version of himself.

When they got to the elevator Billy pressed the button and waited patiently for it to arrive. He retrieved his hands from Steve's body



and settled with observing the brunette. Steve avoided his gaze and shied away from the attention. Did Billy pick up on the changes? Could he have noticed something was off with Steve? Was there something off about Steve? He'll still end up in bed with Billy, they were still gonna fuck, and in the morning Steve would wake up alone. He'll still wake up to a cold space, he'll still going to feel used and dirty in the morning. Thus did anything really change?

The elevator arrived, they got in, Billy is still not touching him and Steve was stuck between being grateful and sad. He wanted to be touched, to forget the feelings that were running like poison in his veins slowly and silently killing him. Steve wanted to forget, to feel something else other than all those bad emotions. However, he knew that if Billy touched him, he wouldn't be able to think clearly he would say the wrong things, spill his secrets out, maybe confess an unspeakable truth.

The elevator was going up, to the 18 floor where Steve lived. The perks of having a wealthy family, he was able to afford the high levels, the fancy complex, in the rich people zone. Since Billy knew nothing about him it was nice letting him know he was rich at least. Maybe if he wasn't going to love Steve for who he was, he'll love him for his money. Who was he kidding? Billy was a working man who looked and dressed as the rich, he was one of them and he seemed to like it, Steve didn't. He didn't need Steve.

5

He'll only break your heart.

8

You'll have to pick the pieces up yourself.

12

It stopped, the door opened. Mrs. Brown, the old lady that lived three doors next to Steve, walked in.

"Oh, Steve! How are you, honey?", she asked smiling. Steve liked Mrs. Brown, she was a nice lady who often invited him over for tea and

dinner.

"Hi, Mrs. Brown. I'm fine. Thanks, for asking. How are you?"

"I'm well, sweetie. Haven't seen much of you lately. Are you tired of me, young man?!" she teased. Steve didn't think she actually noticed Billy standing there. If she did, she probably didn't think they were together or even knew each other. She completely ignored him. He didn't really blame her Billy does indeed look intimidating and like someone who didn't want to be approached.

"What? Me? Tired of you? Never!" Steve replied, giggling. "How's everything going?"

"Everything is fine, darling, don't worry your pretty head over us. We were doing fine before you came here, boy, I'm sure a couple of days without attention won't kill us. Oh, yes, I was just at Martha's' the poor woman broke her arm!"

"Oh no, is she okay?" Steve asked, worry in his voice. He would have to stop by later and wish Mrs. Smith a quick recovery.

"Well, of course, she's fine, its just a broken arm, nothing serious. She had it cast. I was just there. Her grandchildren drew on it, it's so adorable.", Mrs. Brown gashed. She loved the children. She had always wanted some, unfortunately for her, she never got the chance.

"I'll make sure to stop by tomorrow. Did she save me a spot?", Steve asked jokingly.

"Don't be silly! Of course, she saved you a spot right in the front where everyone can see!"

"Great! Now I'm gonna get remembered for my horrible handwriting...", Steve said sarcastically hiding the fact that he was so touched by the gesture.

Mrs. Brown hit him on his arm. It didn't hurt and only made Steve grin. "Don't say that boy. Someone like you won't be remembered for a damn handwriting, you're destined for greater things, Steve. These days you can't find someone as nice and pure as you.", she said it genuinely, with a flooding sincerity that it moved his broken heart.

He felt Billy tense for a moment, he wondered why.

"Awe, Mrs. Brown you're making me blush, stop it!"

18

The elevator stopped the door opened, they all emerged out of it. It was then that Mrs. Brown noticed Billy.

Steve wished she didn't.

"Oh, sorry, dear, I didn't see you there. Hi," she said sweetly.

Billy smiled at her and Steve was right, his smile was a killer. "Hello, ma'am."

Msr. Brown looked at Steve expectedly. At first, he was confused, then he understood her. She wanted him to introduce them. "Yeah, my bad. Mrs. Brown. This is Billy my....." Your what Steve? He's not your boyfriend nor your lover. Steve looked Billy in the eyes, they were blank "Friend. Billy, this is Mrs. Brown, my neighbor."

Something in Billy's eyes flickered, another piece of this puzzle that he didn't understand.

"Nice, meeting you Mrs. Brown," Billy said politely.

"Likewise", she smiled sweetly.

They stopped at his apartment and watched as sweet old Mrs. Brown went on her own way down the halls to her apartment. Steves' hands were shaking when he tried to open the door. He felt a little torn between that sweet encounter and whatever he could see in Billy's eyes. Once he managed to open the door, he pushed it wide open and let Billy walk in first. Steve followed him in. He didn't turn around to Billy, as he closed the door, he kept facing it with his back to Billy. Steves' heart was beating so fast he felt the building shake with every beat, he heard it in his ear and tasted it in his throat. He needed to

gather up the courage to face his dreams and nightmares all at once. To forget and remember all.

'You can do this, you're already broken, he couldn't possibly do more damage.'

Steve turned around and Billy was on him instantly, kissing him with so much passion and intensity, Steve couldn't think straight. He pushed Steve against the door with big hands and held him there. He trapped him on the spot, caged him with his body until all Steve could feel, think and breath was Billy. Only when their bodies were pressed against each other, Billy allowed his hands to explore, to trace the familiar skin with his fingertips. Billy licked Steve's bottom lip asking permission for entrance. And Steve gladly granted him that. Quickly the sweet kiss turned to a heated tongue battle, each fighting for control, dominance. In the end, as always, Billy won and Steve yielded.

He dived head first with no intention of coming out to the surface ever again. Billy broke the kiss leaving the younger boy whining from the lost of contact only to make him moan in pleasure when he kissed his neck, sucking on Steves sweet spot biting it gently. Billy's hands moved all over his body, feeling every inch of Steve making him come back to life temporarily with the fires set on his skin. Steve needed him and he was losing control. The bits and pieces of sanity he had were giving up on him. He wanted to tell Billy, He wanted, no, needed to beg for it but Steve was too weak, too broken to say something. To say anything.

Billy licked the spot he marked one last time before crashing their lips back together. They fit perfectly like the pieces of a puzzle, made for each other. Steve wished that was true. After Billys small tour around his body, his hand landed on Steves ass giving it a small squeeze making him moan into the kiss. He grabbed him and lifted him up a bit, signaling Steve to wrap his legs around Billy's waist which he did. Steve locked his arms around Billy's neck while he carried them to the bedroom not breaking the kiss for one second. There was something so sexy about being carried and thrown around so easily. Steve loved that.

Once they reached the bedroom, Billy gently laid him down on the bed, taking off both of their shirts. As soon as Steves' chest was exposed Billy's lips were all over it kiss and sucking it leaving marks everywhere, almost like he wanted everyone to know that Steve was his, a declaration of ownership. It wasn't true. 'He doesn't love me' Steve reminded himself. Only by this, he could make sure to make it out alive when Billy inevitably left.

Steves hands slowly found their way to Billys bare chest, touching it, loving the feeling of skin on skin. Billy started kissing his way back to Steves' lips, beginning with his tummy, then his chest, neck, jawline and finally his lips. Billy's hands squeezing his ass turned Steve into a moaning mess. Billy opened the zipper of the younger boy's jeans, pulling them down, just throwing them to the side. He broke off the kiss just to start kissing his way down to Steves boxers taking them off with his teeth revealing his hard length. He looked down at steves naked body. For the first time, he smiled at him, he didn't smirk or anything, he smiled just for Steve.

"You're so beautiful, you know that?", Billy said, his voice so sweet and caring. Billys' blue eyes were burning with some nameless emotion, he was exposing something of himself at this very moment. But Steve didn't understand, he couldn't understand. His eyes were whispering things to Steve, trusting him with a secret. But Steve didn't understand his language.

This is a new side of him. He was always emotionless, he didn't show his feelings. Steve had to try hard to read him but today, tonight he was opening up. Maybe it was the alcohol getting to Steve's head, showing him things that weren't really there. Maybe he was so in love, he was hallucinating. That must be it. 'He doesn't love me', Steve reminded himself. Where was his dignity? Why did he swallow his pride and beg? No matter how hard he wished, no matter how many times he prayed, nothing really worked, nothing changed. Billy didn't love him. He may lust after Steve, he may desire him, but Billy didn't love him. He didn't want him the way Steve needed it. So why were they still doing this?

Without any warning, Billy took Steve into his mouth, sucking harshly. Steve ran his hands through Billys golden locks pulling at it gently, urging him for more.

"Uh...f-fuck", he moaned out in pleasure.

Billy went up and down faster and faster making Steve go weaker and weaker, breathing heavily. But then, all of a sudden, he pushed Billy off of him, Steve couldn't take it anymore. Billy looked at him confused.

"I want you," Steve told him weakly feeling sorry for himself. Why was he believe loving and giving himself to someone who didn't love him back? Someone who didn't care that he was the only one who had ever seen Steve like this. Steve was strong, he really was, just not with Billy. Billys' eyes went wide then softened a bit, he wasn't used to Steve asking for something. The boy would usually just let him do whatever he wanted.

Billy usually looks at him with lust or hunger but this time there was something else. Maybe adoration, or was that just wishful thinking? Billy nodded at Steve, then grabbed the lube and the condom from the nightstand. He lubed three fingers moving them around Steves entrance spreading the lube. Billy slowly pushed one finger in, making Steve whine in at the feeling. Billy kissed him sweetly and ran his hand all over his body distracting him from the initial discomfort. Whispers of sweet nothings and praises found it's way into his ears making everything feel so heavenly. The pain turned into pleasure after the second finger was in stretching him and opening him for Billy's big dick. Before he knew it all three fingers were thrusting into Steve making him moan softly to himself, holding back. He couldn't take it anymore the feeling of pleasure was overwhelming and Steve needed Billy inside him now. He wanted them to become one, he wanted to forget what was about to happen next just when this was going to end. He wanted to pretend that the man who owns his hart would stay.

"Fuck, Billy! please, please, please." Steve didn't know what he was begging for. For Billy to fuck him? For him to stay? To love him? Maybe he was begging for all of it, maybe he was begging for everything and nothing. Billy looked at him for a moment then nodded in response he slowly took his fingers out of Steve leaving him whining from the loss. Billy reached for the condom and was about to open it up when Steve took it from him.

Billy smirked at him. "Wanna put it on for me, princess?"

Steve firmly shook his head.

"I - um - I want to feel you.", he said blushing harder than ever before.

Billy looked at him, a mixture of worries and vivid emotions filling his blue eyes

"You sure, princess?", he asked.

Steve nodded. He didn't trust his own voice, knowing it probably sounded desperate. Although Steve was truly desperate for him, for a lot of things, Billy didn't need to know that, he didn't need to see Steve weaker than he already had. Billy reached for the lube putting some all over his length before he looked at him, Billy's blue eyes swallowing him whole searching for any sign of hesitance. After finding none, he pushed inside.

Billy waited patiently for Steve to adjust to the feeling, tracing and kissing him everywhere. He was feeling Steve up holding him in a way that he hadn't done before. Hope bloomed in Steves' heart, mending tiny pieces of him. It was all so different and new there was something raw about the way Billy is acting today. Today, tonight, he was an open book written with forgotten words that Steve couldn't quite read. When Steve gave him a sign Billy started thrusting in and out of him.

"Fuck your so t-tight, princess" he groaned out.

Billy had a hold of both of his hands and pinned them above him. His thrusts were hard and deep but at a slow pace. Billy dragged them out, savoring the feeling of having full contact with Steve.

He kissed him hard, tender and sweet. Steve was biting his lips, trying to hold back his moans. Billy kissed him below his ears and whispered "Let me hear you" to him. Steve obeyed, he let Billy hear him loud and clear, he let the neighbors hear, the entire building how good Billy was, how good he was for Billy. Steve obeyed like he always did, like he always wanted to, but only for Billy, only him no

one else. Billy's thrusts got faster, harder if possible. Steve was gasping, he couldn't breathe, his orgasm was on the edge, he was going to come.

"Billy, please." He begged weakly, brokenly.

"Come for me, kitten, scream my name," Billy whispered to him.

Steve came with a cry of Billy's name and tears running down his face. He was breathing heavily sobbing as Billy kept thrusting in, over and over again till he reached his own climax. Billy kissed him when he came, swallowing both of their moans. Billy pulled out of him slowly and Steve felt his hot come dripping from his hole, running down his thighs and into the sheets. He was laying next to him, both of them struggling to fill their lungs with enough air to breathe. Today it was different, yes, it was as intense and as good as usual but something was there that hadn't been there before. There was a certain tenderness in the way Billy touched him today, in the way he looked at Steve. There were feelings other than lust in his gaze, feelings Steve didn't quite understand.

Steve didn't remember how or when it happened but Billy's hands were on his hips then their bodies were getting closer. Steve's head ended up on Billy's chest while the older man had his arms warped around him. He had dreamed of this moment so many times, he tried to imagine how would it feel to be in Billy's arms. Whatever he was expecting was nothing compared to the real thing. This felt better than winning the basketball championship, better than getting into college and definitely better than anyone had ever made him feel. Billy kissed his head played with his hair ran his hands up and down his naked back. It felt like heaven. Or maybe it was. Did Steve die and go to heaven? It felt too good to be true.

They sat in a comfortable silence. Or at least for Billy, it was, he was content having the boy in his arms. Holding him, touching him, kissing him, it made things happen inside of him, he didn't understand how someone can make you feel everything and nothing at the same time. How could he need more yet want none of it? How could he feel and know so much yet feel hopeless? He was stranded, hands tied and blind all he felt was Steve. It couldn't possibly be, could it? Was his heart capable of having feelings? It was a terrifying



thought.

To Steve, the silence was uncomfortable, it was mocking him. He had so much to say but little will to say it. He wanted to ask for what he wanted, for what he deserved but the fear of losing Billy for good held him back. His tongue was tied and he was running out of time, out of reasons to continue on with this.

Steve needed to say something, anything, he just had to. Every word kept unspoken suffocated him.

"Billy?"

"Yes, princess.", his voice was deep, sexy even.

Billy always called him princess, never by his name. Did he remember Steve's name? Steve brushed the thought away, trying to ignore the pain in his chest. The pain always came afterward, at the end.

"Do you love someone?" Steve's voice was barely above a whisper.

The question seems to catch him off guard or was it the desperation in Steve's voice, the silent cry for help? Steve could feel Billy's heart beating fast under his head.

"No, I don't. Love makes you weak, it gives other's a chance to break you."

Steve blinked the tears away. He was done crying over Billy Hargrove, he decided. If Billy can stop himself from getting emotionally attached so could he, couldn't he?

"Yeah, it does." His voice cracked at the end, Billy said nothing.

Billy pushed him to the side and got up, putting his boxers back on immediately. He got dressed. Steve looked at him in confusion trying his best to conceal the panic rising up in him, the fear of never seeing Billy again.

"Where are you going?"

Billy reached into his jeans and took something from his pocket waving it in front of Steve so he could see it

"I'll just have a smoke and come back. Don't worry, princess," he said taking his cigarettes and his phone with him, as he walked out of the apartment.

There were none of his belongings left. He wasn't coming back.

Billy lied.

Of course, he did.

As soon as the coast was cleared Steve broke down sobbing, he felt used, dirty, lying in bed smelling like sex with no one by his side. He had nothing left of Billy except the remaining warmth that will soon grow cold.

## 2. The Flame Of Life To My Dying Fire

### Notes for the Chapter:

A little bit of Dustin and Steve dynamic and a whole lot of angst. I hope you like it!

The pain was unbearable, like nothing he ever felt before. His heart ached and his soul cried. His lungs were burning as Steve desperately tried to draw in enough air to bring him back to life. Billy took his soul with him when he walked out of that door and now Steve is nothing but a shell of what he once was. He feels hollow, empty. He feels everything and nothing. Steve can hear his heartbreaking, how could it be possible? How can something that is already broken brake again?

Steve covered his face with Billy's pillow and took a deep breath, it smelt just like him. It reeked of expensive clone, cigarette and strawberries flavoured candy. The smell invaded his body and set it on fire, the pain was unbearable. Steve screamed into the pillow at the top of his lungs. He screamed and screamed till his throat burned and his body trembled with every sob that left his quivering lips. The pillow swallowed his screams, it stole his cries of help the high pitch of his screams were nothing but muffled pleas that went unheard by the whole world.

Billy left and Steve was dying. All the pain, the wretchedness and the agony felt like death. A small part of Steve wished it was, wished he would die now. Because even with all this suffering death ends peacefully. There is no pain, in the end, there is nothing. Alive, every breath will remind him of Billy, every time he looks in the mirror he'll remember the art Billy drew on his skin, every time he thinks he'll think of Billy. Alive, the pain will live with him, in him.

No,

Steve can't let himself think that way, it's too dangerous. He's too weak, too broken to stand in the way of such darkness. There was no

light left in him to fight off this sickness inside, the ghosts, the monsters, the voices they were all too much, too strong. He felt them fighting for control. He could sense them in the back of his mind, the pit of his stomach and the tips of his fingers. Bad, dark souls were buzzing in his mind. Steve needed them to stop, he needed to stop, stop thinking, stop feeling, everything needed to stop.

Steve threw the pillow across the room not caring where it landed. the pillow ended up knocking something off the dresser and braking it. The sound of shattering glass was satisfying, it mirrored the sound of his heart breaking. He sighed running his hands through his hair, he was losing his mind.

Without thinking, Steve reached out his hand blindly searching for his phone once he got a hold of it he unlocked it with some difficulty due to the tears in his eyes. He opened his contacts list and started looking for a name, the flame of life to his dying fire. When he found the person he was looking for he pressed call. It's 12:30 p.m. on a Thursday night they were probably asleep and had classes in the morning. Guilt washed over him and his anxiety kicked in, this is a bad idea he should hang up. He took a deep breath, Steve allowed himself to be selfish for a moment, he needed someone or he's going to go crazy.

ring.....

Steve turned and faced his bedroom door.

ring...

He blinked away the tears.

ring.....

Steve sniffled

ring...

He rubbed his eyes till they were red and puffy.

ring.....

The tears stopped, the pain didn't.

ring....

"Steve? It's past midnight man."

His breath hitched.

Steve felt guilty, his voice sounded tired over the phone, thick with sleep. Maybe he shouldn't have called, maybe it was time he dealt with his problems on his own and stopped dragging the whole universe into his mess.

"Dustin" It came out in a gasp, a cry of help, a silent plea of life, of death. He warped his hands around himself holding himself together or else Steve feared he'll only fall apart.

Dustin sat up straight, wide awake now. There was no trace of sleep left in him, the tiredness he felt vanished and was replaced with fear. He thought of the worst, his heart was beating fast, his ears were ringing, every cell in him was buzzing with dread.

"What's wrong? are you okay?" He asked frantically already out of his bed and changing. His brain wasn't fully functioning yet if his focus was present and he wasn't sleepy Dustin would have seen the irrational side of his decision.

No, not really. It didn't matter if it was rational or not, he didn't care that he was a hundred mile away. If Steve needed him he'll be there.

Steve asked himself, am I okay? No, not one bit. His heart felt like a ghost town, ruins of an abandoned city. It was a reminder of something that lived once, beating and whole. This thing inside of him where his heart should be, this thing that's beating, it feels fake, cheated. Billy ripped his heart out of his chest and took it with him. So was he okay?

"No." Steve trembled from the force of his confession his voice hoarse

from all the screaming he did."I'm not okay."

"Are you hurt? Talk to me, Steve."

"Yeah, it hurts, it hurts so fucking much I...", Steve couldn't help but breathe in deeply, barely hiding the fact that he was sobbing. The truth was hurting him. "I can't stand it anymore!"

"What's wrong? You need me to call an ambulance?" Dustin sounded worried and if possible that broke Steve's heart just a little more.

"No, I'm not... Listen, it's not that easy.", Steve was biting back on his tears. You couldn't go to the hospital for a broken heart. This couldn't be fixed. Not this time.

"Talk to me, please."

Steve truly wanted to, he wanted to talk, to express his emotion he just couldn't put them into words. His emotions were excessively strong, like a fire burning right in the middle of his chest. All the words were inadequate and ineffective in comparison, they couldn't possibly convey his feelings, they wouldn't do them justice.

Hot tears of frustration ran down his cheeks and Steve wiped them angrily. He was struggling with his words, they wanted to fall out, to be told and to be heard but he wanted them in, he wanted to hold on to Billy just a little bit longer.

"It's like, I feel everything so...so.....piercingly. It's a mess and they're so strong I-" Steve sealed his lips shut, what else could he say? He's suffocating, walking on the tip of a blade with bleeding feet. He was dying or already dead it feels the same. How could he put this into words?

"I feel numb, the kind where you feel everything but you're numb, emotionless. God, I don't make sense, this is stupid, I'm stupid!" Steve pulled his hair angrily his nose flaring as he fought the tears.

Dustin froze, he stopped what he was doing for a moment. He had expected the worse. Dustin thought Steve got in an accident, his car

crashed, he fell down the stairs, he burned himself anything but that. He relaxed a little now knowing Steve was not in any danger it looks like another one of his episodes. How long has it been since he had one?

"No, no keep going! just keep talking." Dustin urged him.

Steve hiccuped, whipped his tears with the back of his hands and took a deep breath. keep talking? its what his therapist used to say, keep talking till there was nothing left to say.

"You know when you drown and you gasp for air but you're underwater so you just end up filling it with water?" Steve asked counting the lights on the ceiling, pointing at them one by one as if they were shining start on a dark sky.

"Yes?" Dustin started to wonder if Steve was even sober or just wholly broken. It could be both, this is dangerous.

"And if you hold your breath you'll soon end up with no oxygen, you need to breathe?"

12 lights.

"yes." Dusten hesitated.

"It feels like that, every breath fills my lungs with water and every second I don't breathe I run out of oxygen, out of life. It's like a mess in there, wait, no," Steve shook his head "I'm the mess!"

"Steve?"

"Mmm?" Steve said looking at the door wishing Billy would walk in now and make him feel silly for believing he wouldn't.

"Are you drunk?"

Steve's body shook with hysterical laughter. His mad loud laugh turned into heartbreaking sobs. Listening to him broke Dustin's heart.

"Steve?"

"No Dustin, I'm not drunk. I wish I was though. I wish I was so drunk I don't remember any of it. I don't want to remember how it feels."

Steve had wished for a lot of things in his life, he wished for parents that loved him and gave him attention, he wished to be normal, he wished for Nancy to love him back but he had never wished so bad to have amnesia to forget about Billy, about everything he felt with and without him.

"Hey, calm down i-"

"Am I not enough?" Steve rushed out chewing on his lips.

Dustin had heard that tone so many times before to know they have reached a dangerous territory. He needs to be careful and watch his steps. Dustin is walking on eggshells now, on the delicate side of Steve. This was the dark lands, the pieces they had to super glue together to make Steve whole again. Dustin took a deep breath, he was too far away for this conversation and Steve was unstable to go through it alone.

"Steve....."

"Please." It was barely above a whisper yet it held so many emotions. Steves' voice shook him to the core, it waked up feelings in him Dustin didn't know he was capable of feeling. It brought back memories of a vulnerable Steve and pieces of a broken heart. Dustin wouldn't admit it to anyone, ever, but he was crying too.

"You're more than enough. You're too good, too perfect, too pure, too out of this world to be deserved by anyone. Look, whoever that girl is, she was lucky to have you for the time she had you. She'll regret it someday when she realises what she had."

Steve cried harder, friends don't lie, Dustin won't lie to him, none of them would. Did he truly believe that? All of it? Would he still think that way when Steve tells him it's a he, not she? Would he still looked



up to Steve if he knew what he let a man do to him? If he knew he was brought down to his knees? That he had begged shamelessly for unspeakable things?

"How long were you together?" Dustin asked. Steve hadn't reacted that way over Nancy, he must have loved this girl whoever she was. Back then Steve was torn in half. His colours were worn out, parts of him faded into dust. He was falling into a bottomless hole of pure darkness. Now, Steve sounds like he finally reached the end, he crashed into the ground shattering himself into tiny pieces that were impossible to put together.

"Nine months, but we're not together, Billy didn't want a label, he wanted some fun. I guess he grew bored of me."

Steve waited, he waited for Dustin to express his disgust over his confession, waited for the honour of being looked up to be taken from him like everything else. He expected to be yelled at, to hear a long lecture about how sick he was for loving another boy, a man even, 10 years older maybe, who knew? Even if the world has progressed, even if it's 2018, Hawkins is still a small town in nowhere. The people there are still close-minded, they were raised to think it was wrong.

"Well, Billy is an asshole who doesn't know what he's missing on." nothing in Dustin's tone changed, there was no disgust, nothing put concern. Steve let out a breath he didn't know he was holding, a weight fell off his shoulders and Steve was grateful.

"I thought I could change him you know," Steve shamefully confessed "He had this reputation for sleeping around and I thought I could change that, be an exception," Steve remembered how naive and dumb he was thinking he could close a deal with the devil. Hah, an exception? more like a plaything. "I thought that maybe, just maybe I could make him fall for me, I could be enough to convince him to leave all of that behind. I wanted him to change but he ended up changing me. King Steve" he laughed "I'm nothing but a needy slut."

Maybe it was the way he said it with finality and no room for an argument like he truly believed it or it was the words themselves all that matters is Dustin's blood was boiling with rage. No words such as those are allowed to describe his Steve. Not even by Steve himself.

"Don't say that about yourself, it's not true!" growled.

"It is!" Steve argued "It is true. I, Steve Harrington is nothing but a slut for Billy Hargrove. He'll go and come as he pleases and I'll let him in every time." Steve said his voice cracking at the end.

"Listen to me, Steve." Dustin pleaded, he needed him to listen. Steve can't think that way, he wouldn't let him "You're not a slut, that's not true!" he insisted strongly his voice rising a bit.

"King Steve? That's not who you are, it's what everyone thought you were. There is so much more to you than a high school title. You're one of the best people out there, you're kind and considerate. You care for others and respect them. You're funny, charming and good looking. You're smart and unique. Billy couldn't have been worthy of you, he will never be." Dustin thought of all the times Steve was there for him, taking care of him. He remembered when Steve taught him how to talk to girls, how to do his hair and how to shave. Steve had been there through his first breakup, his high school graduation and he was the one who helped him apply to university. With only four years apart Steve had managed to be the man figure Dustin needed in his life. Steve had given so much it was his time to give back, just a little. "Hell, I don't know how I got to be your friend! Do you know how happy that makes me feel? how honoured I feel?"

A grenade exploded in Steve's heart he felt emotions of every shade of colour. Bright yellow mixed with Blue creating a beautiful green in between.

"Dustin I-"

"No, get your shit together and stop this pity party you've got going on. If he's not there telling you how amazing of a person you are then he's not worth it. Just leave it behind you. Your heart will get broken

a couple more times before you find the one. Don't waste your time dwelling on this. For now, focus on yourself and love will find a way, I promise." He shouldn't make promises he can't keep, they both knew that. Dustin shouldn't water him with false hope and plant him in a soil full of lies in the hopes of him growing whole again. It was wrong and unfair to both of them. Dustin still did it though and Steve still believed it. They left the rest to hang over their heads and float away.

Dustin had his back bag out and wide open ready to be filled with his stuff. He opened his closet and went through his clothes with Steve on speaker. He threw two changes of outwear on the bed then looked for a pyjama, the one with tiny Chewbaccas' all over it (it always made Steve laugh for no reason) he brought some fresh underwear and his toothbrush and started putting the things in the bag.

"Black Nikes goes with everything right?" Dusten asked out of nowhere.

Steve sniffed paused and frowned in confusion. "What?" He asked in disbelief not sure if he had heard right. Did Dustin just ask for a fashion advice while he was pouring his heart out?

"Does black Nikes go with everything? I mean black looks good with everything right?" Dusten repeated himself again. He doesn't need to take another pair of shoes, does he?

He did. The question took Steve threw him off a bit, it came out of nowhere and he had to think for a moment for an answer. Do black Nikes go with everything? Well yeah, but what did this have to do with everything?

"Yeah, they do," Steve said his voice hesitant.

"Good," Dustin said, no need for another pair.

It went quiet then.

He looked around, did he need anything else? he'll take his laptop later and put both of his phone and laptop charger in. His keys were

on him so was his wallet. He'll buy some ice cream and junk food once he gets to Los Angeles, hopefully, it'll cheer Steve up. Dustin took a glance at the watch, 12:45, the drive from San Diego to Los Angeles was about two hours if he left now he'll be at Steve's around 2:45 less if the streets were empty. Luckily for him, Dustin only had one class on Friday, Quantum Physics. He'll write the professor a quick email saying he had a family emergency and had to leave for the weekend.

Steve turned giving the bedroom door his back. What's the use of staring at it when he knew Billy was not coming back? He faced his bedroom window instead. His vision was blurred but Steve could still make out the shining lights and dancing figures on the rooftop of the building in front of his. A module lived there that threw regular parties or was it a movie director? It didn't really matter.

"I'm scared," Steve whispered.

He had said it while Dustin's apartment door was closing and Dustin had missed it, he had heard something but couldn't make out what it was.

"Come again."

Steve blushed, embarrassed by his confession. He was glad Dustin didn't hear it. He needed to stop being so weak and vulnerable all the damn time, he was not made of glass for god sake!

"Nothing."

"Steve," It was a warning, they both didn't know of what.

Steve took a deep breath, this was Dustin, the younger brother he had always wished for. Steve could tell him anything.

"I'm scared," he whispered to his empty apartment, empty bed and his empty heart. The dark observed his words in leaving no trace of them.

"Of what?"

"I'm scared of my feelings, of staying like this, like..... like I'm broken. I'm scared I'll have to carry this with me wherever I go. I'm scared I'll crack under the weight of this depression. I'm scared this ruined me." he could say so much more, he could let some secrets out and tell Dustin he didn't know who he was if he wasn't Billy's. Even when there was not much of a conversation going on, even when all they did was have sex Steve didn't know anything but it. The feeling of waiting for the call, the longing that filled him from head to toe, it was all he knew. Billy had become a part of him, a deadly silent part of him.

"Don't be, you have us, don't forget. You have people that love you and would do anything for you. We'll get through this together, okay?"

Dustin reached his car, he threw the bag in the backseat and got in. This is going to be a long drive knowing that he can't be there sooner, reaching Steve quicker. Maybe to others, this looks so silly. Dropping everything and driving a hundred mile to help a friend get over a heartbreak but to him, to the party, it wasn't. Steve has both delicate heart and soul, things like this affect him severely. It scars him deeper than any wound would, it keeps him up at night and hunts his sleep away. Steve had only freshly gained control of his anxiety and cured of depression and this looked like a step back, it looked like a door opener, the kind of doors you hide monsters behind. Dustin can't let this happen, can't let years of therapy go to waste, he can't let those tears they shed be shed in vain.

"Dustin?" Steve called.

"Huh?" he was already on the highway making his way to Steve.

"Come please, I don't want to be alone, I can't be alone." Steve held his breath, he shouldn't have asked, he should take it back. Dustin had classes at the university, he had his own life. Why did he keep bothering him with his?

"I'm already on my way buddy."

It was that feeling again, feeling of bright colours in his heart. Steve liked it, he had no idea what it was, it's just a feeling Dustin makes him feel that Steve had no name for. Maybe he could call it the Dustin feeling? Yes, Steve was not creative.

"Thank you," Steve said his voice thick with emotions.

"Of course, Just go take a shower, refresh yourself and get busy till I get there. Go out if you want, nowhere dangerous. I don't want you alone right now. Can you do that for me?"

Dustin asked. Steve needed to distract himself with anything before the break down happens, he can't have it without him there to walk Steve through it.

Steve hesitated, he didn't want to get out of bed for maybe forever? But Dustin was right, he needed to distract himself, get his shit together. He can't keep sulking over it. What they had ended, to be specific will be ended by Steve and they weren't actually together this shouldn't be hard.

"Yeah okay."

"Thanks, buddy. Listen be sensible and don't do something stupid. No drinking and no clubs of any kind just go find yourself a nice 24 hours diner and get a milkshake or something." Dustin suggested.

"Yeah, Yeah I can do that."

It'll be nice to just be on his own enjoying a milkshake, right? He'll stop thinking of Billy.

"As soon as you pick a place and settle down send me your location

and I'll come and get you, okay?"

"Okay," Steve said in a small voice, he didn't know what they were doing anymore.

"Good, now go take a shower."

"Yes, sir."

Dustin chuckled, Steve hanged up. He didn't say goodbye, was there a point in saying it when he was going to see him soon?

A heavy sigh escapes him, this is a mess. Dustin can't do it alone, he'll need help. It'll take a lot of effort and time to put Steve back together. Dusti hated how Steve bottles everything up until there is no room for more. How he keeps bushing and shoving his emotions around till it explodes in his face.

As soon as he reached a red light Dustin took his phone out. He got into their group chat. Mike, Lucas, Will, Jane and himself have a group chat where they all keep in touch. Dustin pressed record and brought the phone closer to him.

"Mayday, mayday! This is alpha calling for back up. I repeat, this is alpha calling for back up! Mom needs us, I'm already on my way there. Mission cheer Steve up is a go! I'll meet you guys there!"

Dustin sent the voice note then started another one.

"Bring Dungeons And Dragons and the whole Star Wars movie collection and some of Janes hair thingys that makes your hair look crazy, we have a lot of cheering up to do. There is a high chance of us watching Titanic so prepare yourself for the torture." the voice note ended. They'll come, all of them.

Steve lied in bed looking at the ceiling, it stared back mocking him like the rest of himself did. Every beat his heart made felt like a stab, every breath he took emptied his lungs of oxygen, the pain was sharp and unbearable. Steve should get up and leave, he shouldn't stay alone with his thoughts he knew that but a part of him didn't want to make it real. He couldn't find the will to get up and walk away from what's left of Billy, of them. They were a sweet dream that ended with a nightmare, poison in running water. Steve was pure, made of heavenly light and Billy was Satan bastard child and was made of fire, he corrupted Steve and left him alone to burn into ashes. He wished he could find a way to stop all of this, to forget. Maybe he could go to a club, have a million shot and die from alcohol poisoning. bad thoughts Steve told himself, he had to get out of here, but honestly deep down a part of him rather he rote in bed surrounded by Billy's smell, melting into the remaining heat he left behind and breathing the air he breathed.

His inside was a war zone his emotions battled for dominance. There was a fire within him born from chaos. Pieces of him died fighting in honour for what they believed in and Steve wondered if he had ever believed in anything. Steve didn't know what to feel anymore. Nothing made sense to him, his heart wanted a thing and his head another. He was being torn in half between what he wanted and what needed to be done. A storm was raging inside of him, thunder roar shaking him to the bone, lightning struck and every cell of his body buzzed with electricity and the rain, oh the rain! It fell heavily and flooded his inside leaking from his eyes and wetting the pillowcase. Steve was drowning within himself, choking on the blue of Billy's eyes. Every breath felt like his last, every breath made him ache for it to be the last. His cry's of help went unnoticed, contained by the walls of his body. His screams echoed in his head filling the silence with burning flames of self-loathing. He did this to himself, he's the one who danced with the devil bidding on his heart. It was all his fault, what was he thinking playing with fire? Didn't he know he was going to burn? Didn't he know gasoline runs in his veins? All he needed was a flame, a touch of fire and he'll light up like a Christmas tree. Now, look at him, nothing but ashes on the ground, dirt!



Steve sighed he needed to get up, take a shower and wash Billy off his skin, off his heart and soul. He sat up and got to his feet, Steve almost fell over. His feet were like jelly under him Steve fell back into the bed. Trying again he successfully got out of bed and into his two feet. Feeling the almost dried come on his thighs made he grimaces in disgust. Maybe if Billy was his he wouldn't have hated the feeling of it on his body, if Billy was his he'd still be here next to him probably being smug about the whole thing. Thinking about it hurts like a bitch. The screams were too loud, the pain too strong it seemed faded, far away. It was all so decreased Steve felt numb, he couldn't feel or hear any of it. He was empty and unaware of his surrounding. His body was set on autopilot, he was not in control. Everything felt foreign to Steve, the apartment, his thoughts and own skin. They were not his, at least not at the moment. He knew nothing, not what he is or who, he needed Billy for that.

Steve stepped into the bathroom and looked at himself in the mirror. He trailed with his eyes the evidence of ownership Billy left behind, they were nothing but a reminder of abandonment now. His eyes stung as unshed tears gathered, he was nothing but a quick fuck, he knew that from the start yet it still hurt. The skin on his hips was red and tender, even when it wasn't visible Steve could feel blue and purple bruises forming. Tomorrow, when he wakes up, his body will be a work of art drawn by Billy, a masterpiece he deemed unworthy to keep by his side. They will no longer fill his heart with contentment rather with shame and guilt.

Steve took a deep breath and started the shower. He stepped right in feeling the freezing water like needles cutting into his flesh carving Billy's name on his bones with regret. He shivered, once or twice, was he shaking? The ground was unsteady under his feet. Everything was spinning around him. His knees were weak and could no longer carry his heavy heart. Steve willed himself to stay standing, he will not fall, not again. The water temperature started going up, warmer and warmer, hot and now boiling. It was agony, his skin turned an angry shade of red. He probably burned himself but it didn't matter. The pain, it distracted him from his slow and painful death. It gave him

something to feel other than the numbness that is conquering his body. It hurts in all the right places increasing the pain he was already feeling to a new level, it was dizzying.

Steve skipped his hair routine and went straight to scrubbing his body. He ran the sponge over his skin hoping to wash away Billy's trace all over it. It went up and down, again, again and again over his thighs, chest and stomach. Steve wanted to peel off his skin, to crawl out of it. He could still feel the ghost of Billy's hands on him, touching him and holding his body down. Steve scrubbed harder, he didn't want to see the bruises in the morning. He'll hate having to look in the mirror and being forced to see this thing that's looking back at him, he was pathetic. He scrubbed harder. Tomorrow he won't see Billy not even the day after tomorrow or the day after that. Billy will be gone, Steve won't let him in, not again. Steve scrubbed harder drawing out blood. His skin was red all over, it covered Billy, erased him off his skin not for long though.

He fell to his knees, they couldn't carry him up anymore. The marble under him was on fire but his body was ice, they melted into each other. The magnetic field was too strong or was it gravity? something was bulling him down and under. He sobbed, tears were falling down every drop dragging the next. He cried because his parents didn't care about him. He cried because Billy left. Because Nancy didn't love him back. Because he can't seem to do something right. Because he's always being left behind. He cried over so many things that he didn't know why he was sobbing to star with. His body trembled under the pouring water as it washed away the last of his strength. Steve was stripped of his self-control. He curled into himself wishing he could disappear. Steve hugged his knees to his chest, dug his nails into his flesh and cried his eyes out. He shouldn't have played with fire.

## **Notes for the Chapter:**

Thoughts? I'm not sure when I can get the third chapter ready but I'll try my best to have it up soon,

no promises!

### **3. Hurt Me, Hurt You**

Everything was white. The walls, the furniture, and the sheets. The only color in his room came from the different bottles of perfume and other products, that were set on the dresser and inside closed drawers. It looked like a hospital room, except that it was exceedingly wide and spacious to be a hospital room. It looked more like one of the rooms in those sci-fi movies. A white room with no passions or sense of home. Standing in the middle of the room, naked and shivering, Steve felt like he was in one of those movies. Deprived of emotions functioning in a robotic sense. This apartment never felt like home, and honestly, Steve stopped trying to make it feel anything close to it.

He felt strange. Foreign to his surroundings, to his skin and own flesh. It was as if he was having an out of body experience. Steve watched himself dress, his hands disappearing into the closet and reappearing with random items of clothing. He saw his angry red skin hide under layers of cotton. He saw his clothes observe every drop of water that fell of his wet hair. He saw his body shiver, his teeth chattering and silent tears run down his face yet Steve felt none of it. He was numb, emotionless and senseless. That person was not him, or maybe he was not that person. Its the same isn't it? He was nothing, still, he existed. He was no longer alive just merely breathing.

Steve was fully clothed now and stood in the middle of his room feeling lost and helpless. What now? Whats next? He knew that this day would come, that one of them would walk away. He knew it would hurt, Nancy Hurt not the normal kind of hurt. He knew it'll leave him gasping for air, or maybe hope. But he had never expected it to hurt this bad, to put Nancy to shame and leave him gasping for life. It was nothing like he imagined it to be. When did Billy become so important to him? How had he not noticed that this was happening? All sorts of questions exploded in his head like an

erupting volcano. They melted his brain and Steve couldn't think anymore. He needed to get out of here. He didn't check himself in the mirror, didn't close the lights or lock the door. He didn't care anymore, what's there to care for? Steve just walked away out of the apartment having half a mind to not set another foot in that place again.

Unsteady feet carried him away and with every step, Steve became more aware of the light weight of his wallet tucked in his pocket tempting him to spend all the money he had on alcohol. It'll help, it'll make him forget for a while. He'll feel nothing and think of nothing. A temporary fix, a fake sense of wholeness, alcohol could give him that. It'll make him drunk, mind absent that was all he needed right now. He'll wonder unaware into the night and maybe end up in an alternative universe. A universe where he lacks nothing, where no one leaves him behind. Alcohol, Alcohol, Alcohol, Alcohol, Dustin. Steve thought of Dustin and how disappointed in him he would get. He thought of Dustin driving worriedly through L.A in the dead of night. He thought of the sun revealing him in his drunken state, vomit stain on his shirt and bloodshot eyes. Steve would hate for Dustin to find him in such position. God, it would be humiliating.

The corridor was empty, it was always empty but somehow this time it felt different almost haunted. Maybe it was his paranoia or perhaps the shame that made Steve feel a million sets of eyes following him. It was irrational and completely impossible, he was alone surrounded by creamy walls, no one was watching him. Was it the walls? Could they be watching him? If they were, Steve was glad walls didn't talk. He was glad they wouldn't spill his secrets out for the world to hear. Steve could almost imagine the walls making fun of him. He could hear the faint sound of their hushed whispers as they told the passers his secrets, they would all question his sanity. Even concrete knew better than he did. How could he be so reckless?

One step, two steps, three, four...eleven. The elevator was in front of

him. The shiny silver door reflected the light and Steve couldn't look at it. He reached his hand out and pressed the elevator button calling for it. Steve leaned into the wall as he waited and closed his eyes. What was he afraid of? He took several deep breaths to calm his racing heart, he didn't want to go down but he didn't want to go back either, dread-filled every cell in his body and Steve had yet to figure out of what exactly. A couple more drops slid down his back, it felt like the tip of a blade, Steve shivered.

With a ding, the elevator door opened and Steve stumbled in. His feet still felt like jelly under him and it made him doubt his sobriety, was he drunk? Steve didn't think so. His body was intoxicated with something and all the signs pointed at Billy. Oh, Billy, he was the reason behind all and nothing. Billy was and wasn't, is and isn't and maybe, will always be.

Steve had to hold on to the handrail on the way down not trusting his body with the task of keeping him on his feet. They were shaky and he was fragile, Steve hated it. He stole a glance at himself from the mirror behind, he looked sick. The shine in his eyes was no more, they were blank now, dead. His skin was paler slightly yellowish as if he had seen a ghost. Steve would rather see a ghost than continue on living his nightmares. His once dry clothes were now damped and it seemed like he had subconsciously dressed in almost all black. It fitted well with his mood. Black jeans, black shoes, and a dark shirt. His eyes were almost black too so was his heart and the smoke trapped in his lungs. everything around him seemed black and Steve wondered if he got colorblind or did Billy steal the colors in his life too?

Once he reached the lobby Steve funnily walked out off the elevator. At first, his steps were awkward he looked like a baby taking his first steps. His heavy heart was pulling him down, it was too leaden to be carried around. By walking, Steve was defying gravity. His feet dragged under him, every step was a struggle however it got him

closer and he will keep going, for Dustin.

Steve took a deep breath, you can do this he told himself, just keep walking. One after the other his steps grew confident, he can do this. He was about to open the building door when he noticed him. Billy was there leaning on his car with a cigaret dangling in his mouth and a phone to his ear. His eyes were captivated by the stars or he was simply staring into space, Steve couldn't tell from where he was standing. What's important was, Billy was there, he didn't leave. He didn't lie but only this time, Steve reminded himself. He shook his head trying to get rid of the little spark of hope that flamed in his heart. Billy's presence didn't change a thing, it didn't stop the pain and his heart certainly didn't magically get fixed, so why would it change a thing?

Billy was standing under one of the streetlights, it made the visible skin from his opened shirt glow and the necklace around his neck to shine like a star of his own. The sight was almost angelic wasn't it for the fact that Billy was a demon at heart. An ugly heart or not Billy truly was beautiful. A lump formed in his throat. You will not cry, Steve told himself. He is not yours to have, he reminded himself, and he never was. Steve allowed himself to stare and take in the sight in front of him, soon he'll lose that chance for good. The glass door was reflective and Steve found relief in knowing that Billy could not see him standing there.

Steve watched Billy as he took a deep drag and held the smoke in for a moment before he blew it out. A small grey cloud floated around Billy till a breeze carried it away. Billy frowned, his brows knitted together as he said something to the person on the phone. He threw the cigaret on the ground and stepped on it, putting it out. With a sigh, Billy ran his hand through his golden short hair.

Steve could neither say that he had ever seen Billy completely free and careless nor say he had ever seen the man with such a serious and angry expression on his lovely face. He always seemed to be on the edge, there was always a little stiffness in his muscles. Everything he said, every smile felt practised. It was all too perfect to be genuine. After all this time Steve didn't know why Billy even bothered anymore. Didn't he know how far gone was he? Billy has a good grip on his emotions and could control them easily. Nine months and Steve had never seen him show an iota of feelings before tonight.

There was something going on and whatever it is it's troubling the older man. A part of Steve, the bigger part of him the one that is and will always be in love with Billy Hargrove wanted nothing more than to ease his worries and take away his troubles. He wanted to touch the blue-eyed man and watch the tension leave his body, to make him breath better because he was simply there and let Billy take out his frustration on him. He wanted a real relationship. He wanted all of Billy with the problems that came with him. Steve wanted and wanted but he never really got what he wanted.

Billy started pacing, walking back and forth in a straight line stopping only a couple of times to glare at the ground or to gaze at the sky as if they had all the answers. Maybe they did, who knew? Maybe there was a star out there with Steve's name on it. A star that had the secret to winning Billy's heart written on it with the tears he shed as ink and his wishes as fuel. Steve would pay with his blood to go there. He'd give his last breath to go there, to just know.

Billy was standing with his back to the building entrance oblivious to the fact that Steve was leaving him behind, cutting him off, quitting him, ending what they had, whichever way he'd like to call it. His heart was wild in his chest kicking and screaming for him to stop, to turn back. It wept blood and bet poison, scratched his ribcage and torn his inside to pieces. His heart wanted to escape him and run to



Billy, he wanted Billy. But Steve couldn't have him and neither did his heart. He was bound to break from the start, it was time he accepted it and moved on.

Steve sighed, he should leave. Billy still couldn't see him and Steve took the chance to walk away unnoticed. Okay, you can do this Steve reassured himself. He took a deep breath and pushed the door open a little too forcefully. Billy didn't turn and Steve kept walking. He wrapped his hands around his middle praying for whoever was there listening to broken souls plea to not let Billy notice him. Steve walked quickly with big steps, not quite running but not walking either. He wanted to get away as soon as possible, to be done with Billy. There was a decent distance between him and the door when it slammed shut. Steve winced at the loud sound that filled the empty street but kept walking hoping Billy would let him be.

The sound of the door slamming shut had Billy turn around in a heartbeat. The sudden sound shattered the quietness, that roomed the abandoned street, and made him jump. Was that Harrington? Billy squinted his eyes to get a better look. It was! Billy could make him out anywhere in mere seconds. Where was he going? Did something happen?

"Just go for it Hargrove, you're no coward! Grow some ba-"

"Sam? Listen, I'll call you later." Billy interrupted and ended the call right after. He started walking Steves' way trying to catch up with him. Somewhere deep inside him, panic rose. The fact that such emotion ran through his veins irritated him to no end.

"Princess!" Billy called not too loud but he could tell Steve heard him from the way he picked up his speed. A little more and the boy would

be running from him, Jesus Christ! A spark of anger lit in him, Billy took a deep breath and ignored it.

"Yo, pretty boy!" Billy tried again but Steve still ignored him and kept walking away from him. Did he do something wrong? Billy couldn't recall any act done by him that could make the younger boy run away from him.

The street around them was empty, at almost 1 A.M. Billy was not surprised, they were in the clean neighborhood after all. They all slept early around here, they had places to be in the morning, money to earn. Through his stay outside Steve's complex building, only four cars passed him. It was quiet and dark. The sky was nothing but a starless black hole and the night was dead. Some of the street lights were annoyingly flickering above them, Steve was close to running from him like he was some monster. The whole scene looked like one of his nightmares, his insecurity coming to life, it made Billy uneasy.

"Steve!" Billy almost yelled now.

At the sound of his name coming out of Billy's lips, Steve turned.

"What?" He snapped at the older man. His body was tensed and his arms were crossed tightly in front of him. Billy almost didn't recognize him, Steve's hair was wet and sticking to his forehead it looked nothing like the feathery cloud on his head that used to bounce with every step he took. His eyes were blank with no trace of the warmth that used to draw him in. Steve's tone and body language were accusing him and Billy felt the rage rise in him.

"Where are you going?" Billy asked his tone flat. His blue eyes were narrowed, rigid, cold, hard. He straightened up his back, puffed his chest out and his jaw clenched. His hands were clenched beside him into fists. Billy was trying to intimidate him, Steve could tell. He was ready for a fight, his eyes had a deadness, a stillness to them Steve knew that right now Billy saw him as the enemy.

Billy couldn't explain the burning rage that consumed him. He didn't understand what he felt, why or even how? It puzzled him. The questions echoed in his head unanswered, it bounced around, collided with the walls and then rebounded. Billy couldn't pin it down with an answer, he didn't have one and he had no idea where to start looking for one. The question repeated itself in echoes, it only served to make him angrier.

Steve looked at Billy taking in his anger state, he should walk away while he can, staying would only hurt them both. Their eyes locked and Steve could only see the clock counting down, any second now and Billy will explode. He'll explode and they'll both burn. Maybe the night was young and they could burn into dust till the morning light but Steve's bones ached from the weight and he just wanted to be done, to walk away so he did. Steve turned around and walked away, he was stone cold, ice.

"Goddammit, Steve!" Billy roared. Steve didn't get to walk away from him, no one did.

Some of Steve's confidence flattened at Billy's angry voice. He still loved the man, disgustingly enough Steve still wanted to please him, to fall right back into the trap, chain his hands himself and give Billy the leash. He was a submissive by nature the need to please ran deeper than blood, it was hard to quit. Steve turned around and profoundly stared at him. His glare cut through the thick tension that

filled the air and fueled the fire in Billy's soul.

"Where are you going?" Billy asked again, he seemed to repeat himself a thousand time tonight, Billy hated to repeat himself. He didn't ask nicely, to be precise, he didn't even ask, it was a demand, one Steve can't seem to deny him it.

"None of your fucking business." Steve was being bold, playing Billy's game when he didn't know the rules. What was he doing? They both knew he couldn't do it, he couldn't be hard, he couldn't kill in cold blood, he would crack. Steve couldn't stand on his own feet in front of him, he would only fall to his knees. Viciousness didn't run in his veins like it did in Billy. He could only lose.

"Steve." Billy didn't yell this time, he called his name in a deadly low voice. It was a threat, a warning. Steve was crossing the line, one more wrong move and he'll set the monster inside of Billy free. It'll launch at him, tear them both to the core. It'll scare their broken souls and set a fire in their future. Only chaos came with an angry Billy. You've been warned Billy thought.

"I don't know, just away," Steve said looking at his shoes. There was a dried piece of gum right next to his left feet, luckily he didn't step on it. His arms were crossed and his hand held his upper arms tightly, Steve was hurting himself but he didn't care. He hugged himself, wanting to disappear.

"Away?"

"Away," Steve said. "Away from here, away from you and away from

myself."

They stared at each other not knowing what to do. Steve was done with all of this, he was tired but fury buzzed under Billy's skin and they were both waiting for the explosion. Billy was looking for a fight, that much was obvious for the both of them. They have never fought before, they never did anything but sex. Steve was lost, what should he do? He doesn't know Billy. They never got this far, how did he calm a hurricane?

Billy took a couple of steps closer and Steve took the same amount back. His heart was pumping fast, all the blood rushed to his head making his ears ring. His pupils widened and his mouth went dry.

"Billy please, I don't want to regret you just yet," Steve whispered. Unshed tears gathered in his eyes and Steve blinked repeatedly to push them away. Like magnets their eyes found each other, they can't seem to look away whether it was in lust or anger their eyes always locked. Steve silently begged him to leave him be, to set him free.

"Regret ME?" Billy growled. He said it like it was beneath him as if he was too important to be regretted. Billy eyed him up and down it made him feel dirty. What happened to the man lying next to him moments ago?

Steve sighed and ran a hand through his wet hair. It was getting cold and he was exhausted.

"Just drop it please, go home Billy," Steve said and turned to walk away.

"No," Billy said stubbornly. "Whats wrong with you?" he asked. Billys' eyes were looking at him like he was crazy, mentally unstable. Maybe he was but it left a bitter taste of anger in his mouth. Steve was angry, for the first time.

"My problem is that I've been doing myself wrong acting like your little puppy. I'm walking away from you, I'm ending us if there even was something to end in the first place. Is that too much for your ego? Does it wound your pride, Billy? Does it have to be you walking away first? You, who must have the last word?!"

Words flew from his mouth that Steve never thought he'd say out loud. He knew instantly from the look in Billy's blue eyes that they'd hit their mark. In that instant, the bomb went off. It exploded in between them shattering what they had into glassy shards. There was no going back now. Burning rage hissed through his body like deathly poison, screeching a demanded release in the form of unwanted aggressiveness. It was like a volcano erupting; fury swept off of Steve like ferocious waves. The wrath consumed him, engulfing his moralities and destroying the boundaries he had set for himself. It turned into a game of whos going to hurt the other the most. They should stop, Steve should stop but he couldn't he wanted to hurt Billy just a little bit, to get a taste of satisfaction.

"Go on then, walk away first. Leave me shattered on the ground, I'll beg you to stay if it makes you feel better. Just leave me the fuck alone."

Billy was standing there frozen, taken by surprise by Steves burst of anger. His eyes narrowed in a deadly glare and his fists clenched in a fist. He was itching to throw a punch, to release the anger. His

temper was an inferno, raging fire burning so hot that Billy worried he'll burn the world down to the ground with him.

"You better watch your mouth, Harrington," Billy warned.

"Or what? You're going to hit me, Billy?" Steve challenged. He should really stop. This went too far, they were on the edge now throwing daggers at each other waiting to see who'll fall first.

"Steve," Billy warned again. He didn't want to show Steve the beast inside of him. No matter how angry they both were, Steve was pure, as innocent as they can come and Billy didn't want to stain him with scars. His sins were many, they range from petty little things to unspeakable horrors but he will not do permanent damage to Steve Harrington.

"No, fuck you, Billy! I could be with anyone I want. Anyone would be happy to be with me. I could have a relationship with someone who cares about me. I deserve better than this, better than the way you've been treating me. I'm not some slut, I'm not a whore and I'm definitely not a toy for you to have sex with whenever you want." Steve shouted. Silent tears ran down his pale face.

There was something in that shout, a pain behind it. Billy watched. He watched Steve's eyes taking in the brown orbs. Then he knew, the anger was nothing but a shield for pain, like a cornered soldier randomly throwing out grenades, scared for his life, lonely, desperate. He breathed in real slow trying to calm the raging fire in his soul. Control your anger Billy told himself. Its been so long since he last felt so angry, what did Harrington go to him? He was poisoned. They needed to stop.

"Steve you-"

"You don't give a fuck about me. You don't care about me. You don't love me. Why are you stopping me, Billy? Do both of us a favor and go home. We are done, there is nothing left to say. Go find yourself another person to play with. I'm so sick and tired of watching you leave, having to pick up the pieces you left behind. Every goddamn time, I put my heart back together and you come back and run all over it... But no more!" Steve was sobbing by now. His arms wrapped around himself as if he was afraid the stitches would come loose, that the parts of him he had to sew together would fall apart again.

Billy stood there and watched Steve. There was a rawness to his cries like the pain was an open wound. He clasped onto something for support, anything, his own bones, and then his whole body was shaking. The sobs were stifled at first as Steve attempted to hide his grief, then he was overcome by the wave of his emotions and break down entirely, all his defenses washed away in those salty tears. Billy could do nothing but watch what he did with his own hands. He needed to walk away, he had done enough damage. He turned around ignoring Steve's sobs and started to walk away. Something heavy settled in his heart with every step he took. Suddenly he was in his car, driving into the night with silent tears running down his face. What the hell was happening?

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Thoughts? It was a difficult chapter to write I had 1K written down but I didn't like it so I had to start over. I hope you like it! Please continue to leave me those lovely comments, it makes my day!



#### 4. Oh Poison Of Mine!

The pedal was flat against the floor, pressed as far as it can possibly go. If he increased the pressure, Billy feared he'll break the god damn thing. He speeds down the road, passing streetlight in a blink of an eye.

The street was empty and the night was wicked. All the stars disappeared from the night sky, it was nothing but an endless hole that swallowed his demons. The abandoned street looked haunted, no, felt haunted or maybe Billy was the one who's hunted, by Steve and his broken parts. Billy could still hear his sobs echoing in his ears. It started loud and clear shaking every cell in his body, slowly the volume would drop until it was nothing but faint and distance sounds. When Billy thinks its over, it'll stop now Steves sobs comes back louder. Every sob is a slap in the face, something inside him stung, his gut twisted in disgust.

Billy could still see Steve with his skeleton hands wrapped around himself like the dead, afraid his bones will fall down as he ran away from him into the infinite night. Billy can't shake the image, the flickering lights, the smell of salt water coming from the ocean and the darkness of both his soul and the night combine, Steve was there in the middle of it all running away from him, terrified, as if he was a monster, but you are, aren't you? Billy asked himself, he is.

His tears left a trail of dried salt on his now rosy cheeks and burning shame in his stomach, it flared, roared as it turned his inside into piles of ash, useless, weightless. His walls had crakes, his chains were red from rust, close to turning into dust. What happened to his defences? When did his tight grip loosen? How long has it been since he last cried? Since when did Billy even cry? And over a boy? He is a thirty years old man who cries over someone almost ten years younger than him, pathetic.

The car was going fast however not fast enough. It didn't take him there, it was risky but not dangerous enough to get his heart pumping

and his blood poisoned with adrenaline. He was not dancing with fate, walking on the thin line of life and death wondering will I crash? Will I lose control?

Times like this Billy wished he hadn't sold the Camaro, oh his poor baby! He should have kept it even when it grew old and out of date, even if it wasn't fit to be owned by a wealthy businessman, he should have saved it for when he needed a stress release.

Nothing could take off the edge like speeding in his Camaro. The adrenaline rush he gets, the tingling in his limbs, the buzz under his skin, the extra beats his heart takes it was all so addicting.

In his Camaro Billy could floor the pedal and fly into the future, years onward, he can leave his worries behind and outrun the thoughts running wild in his head. He could get miles ahead of his feelings, leave them in the dust. Billy can breathe a little, get high from the rush and forget his problems until everything caught up to him again.

Now, Billy was angry with no way to let the rage out. He was a berserk volcano waiting to explode and eject burning lava. Billy gripped the steering wheel so tight his knuckle turned white, he's a ticking bomb second away from going off, blowing everything up. Billy was buzzing almost bouncing in his seat, all the atoms in his body were colliding into each other filling him with million jewels of energy that needed to be released, to be set free.

He pressed the pedal harder, it did nothing. The speed didn't increase, stupid Range Rover. The engine was roaring monstrously but Billy saw everything in slow motion, he was living seconds in years. Time was not moving it was stuck mocking his ignorance, laughing at his weakness. He wanted to kill someone.

Billy drove into the night, cutting wounds open as he cut through the darkness. Everything was a blur of passing streetlights and neon signs, he was driving with no destination, into the unknown, just away. That's what Steve said, just away. Billy understood it now, he knows what Steve meant. Away from the feeling, from the problem

or was it away from the truth? Away from the fact that he had loved Billy with all his heart when Billy didn't love him back.

No, Billy was not stupid, he knew Steve loved him. He knew Steve loved him before the boy himself realized he did, long before the signs were clear and long before they first touched. Billy had first seen it in Steves' eyes the day they met. It was there, in his eyes making his pupil dilate and constrict in sync with his heartbeat. It was lurking on the edges taking over so very often.

The moment their eyes locked and Billy took a closer look he recognized the desperation in Steves' eyes. At first, he saw only the warmth, golden sparks of burning fire dancing around in Steves pretty eyes. His eyes were inviting, giving a sense of home to all those who look into them. Only the ones who paid a close attention to Steves' eyes could see the sparks were nothing but the surface, an allusion made to hide whats deeper inside.

Billy paid attention and saw the fire, the cause of such addictive warmth. It was glowing, softly hypnotizing him as it lulled him with a sweet melody made just for him. The fire was nothing but desperation. Maybe there was a hint of sadness and a pinch of helplessness too but the dispersion ruled them out. It was so seductive it had Billy's attention in a heartbeat. He was curious, tempted to share a bed with a partner so desperate to be loved, starved of touch, wanting so much and willing to give everything in return.

For that Billy danced his way around the delicate rose that is Steve, he evened the thorns with his sweet words and watched hungrily as the petals fell undone, one after the other till Steve was stripped off his walls. So Billy approached him, he got closer to the fire, close enough to get lost in the warmth but not close enough to burn. He started a brand new game that moment and made the rules up as he went.

Steve was beautiful, so pretty and adorable. He was innocent, pure and Billy wanted him badly. There was an appeal to his scars, to the broken pieces that scattered around him. Billy craved him, He craved to touch, to taste and to own.

All it took is one time, one touch, one kiss and Billy was coming back for more. Steve was poison and he drank him willingly, addictively. Billy swallowed him with a burn, rotted away from his sweetness, he was obsessed. Steve was a permanent tattoo carved on his bones, he was a part of Billy.

Every time Billy looked into his eyes he'd see pieces of the desperation burn into love. Grey clouds brightened down till they were pure white, raging wind relaxed till it was nothing but a delicate breeze. The boy had so much love bottled deep down inside, stored away not for the right person but for anyone willing to stay, willing to receive what he could offer. Billy was that someone, he stood there with arms wide open welcoming the love Steve threw his was. He dived into the emotions, drowned in the pits of raw feelings. Steve adored him, close to worship him and Billy couldn't get enough of it, he wanted it all, he wanted more.

Everything changed when Steve finally realised he loved Billy. The blur in his eyes, the unfocusness vanished and his honey doe eyes got cleared, Steve could finally see everything crystal clear. Its as if he was blinded and could finally see for the first time, Steve was reborn. Billy felt it in his touch, saw it in his eyes, whoever said the eyes are the mirrors of the soul was right. Billy saw it all in Steves' eyes.

Sex grew mind-blowing, better than any drug, better than the adrenaline rush he always craves, better than the millions of dollars in his bank account. Steve exposed a new side of himself, a flooding river of raw emotions. He was giving and giving with no end and Billy drowned in all of it. The sex left him gasping for air and made his heart do a little dance in his chest. He was on cloud nine, on top of the world, no, fuck the world he was in heaven.

So maybe Billy was hooked, got a little obsessed with the way Steve looked at him like he was a god. Perhaps it was his eyes and not the look or the way Steve whispered his name like a prayer, Was it the small gasp of breath he took every time Billy touched him? It can be the utter submission he had, the devotion he possessed to pleasing others, Steve was so quick to fall to his knees and offer the world. He was in a desperate need to be loved, touched and noticed he'd do

anything for it. Steve gave him what he craves in a plate made of gold, power.

Yes, Billy was not an idiot just an asshole.

Unfamiliar roads turned into a familiar neighbourhood, he passed yellow, white and blue houses all filled with families faking their happiness, God the world is depressing. Soon enough Billy was parking his car in front of his humble home. You'd think with all the money he makes Billy would go and buy himself a mansion or a villa. Instead, he buys himself a perfect American family house with a picket white fence. All he needs is the perfect wife and he'll be living the dream his father was chasing, the perfect family.

Billy got out of the car and marched to his front door slamming behind him his car door. Fury filled him to the top. He was angry and desperate for a release. Why is he angry? Billy didn't know, because of a lot of things. Because Steve walked away from him and he hadn't done it himself, because he was not the one in control, because there are emotions swimming in his ocean blue eyes and most importantly because a part of him didn't want to quit Steve just yet, he can't stand the thought of someone else touching him.

When Billy gets to the door he fumbles with the keys his hands shaking from the rage. Billy misses the keyhole twice and almost screams from frustration, he was going to explode. For a moment he considers breaking the god damn door but the alarm will go off waking half the neighbourhood in the process, it's not worth the fuzz so instead, Billy forces himself to stop and take a deep calming breath, he tries getting a hold of his emotion, to control them, get in first, explode later he tells himself.

When he tries again it works. Billy pushed the door open and rushed in not bothering to check if the door closed behind him or not, it hardly seemed important to him in his state of mind and if someone was stupid enough to try anything, oh boy he was more than ready

for a fight. His bones ached to throw some punches, to taste blood.

Billy made his way down to the basement stripping as he walked leaving trails of his clothes behind, his shirt, jeans, shoes and socks. When he gets there Billy switched on the lights revealing the gym equipment he collected over the years. Working out was a way for him to channel all the anger he had onto something healthy, it was a great way to let out some steam, a better method to deal with his anger issues than self-destruction.

He slowly walks between the different machines until he reached the red punching bag dangling from the ceiling. Billy stood in front of it in nothing but his boxers a light layer of sweat already covering his tanned skin. He doesn't wrap his hands or put on his gloves, he doesn't warm up or stretches his muscles Billy simply started throwing punches with his naked hands. It stung a little but he ignored the pain and kept on punching. The bag barely moved, it hanged unaffected buy his attempts of release and it irritated him.

You're not weak.

You don't care.

You don't love him.

You're in control.

With every swing he took, Billy fed himself a useless lie. He didn't love Steve, did he?

They barely knew each other, they only knew each others body. They didn't talk much, they don't share information about themselves. The only real conversation they had was when they first met and Billy was trying to get in Steves pants. So how could he love someone he didn't know? regardless of if Billy had secretly counted all the moles

on Steves milky skin or not. Or if he knew all of Steves weak spots, that he slept on the right side of the bed, owns three bottles of Johnny Depp's perfume "Sauvage", has Rowntree Fruit Gums in random places in his apartment, counts the street lights till they reach the apartment and can't sleep with the bathroom door open. Billy didn't know him, he doesn't know whats going inside his head, doesn't know what university he goes to, what major is he studying, what are his dreams and goals, Billy had no idea so how can he love him?

His hands hurt bad, they are definitely going to bruise still it doesn't stop him. Billy will keep punching and hitting till he forgets, until he is numb again.

Punch.

I,

Punch.

Don't,

Punch.

Love,

Punch.

Steve,

Punch.

Harrington.

It was a lie and he knew it. Somehow he cared for the kid with doe eyes dripped in honey. A part of him, the cowardly part of him that hid under the inferno of his burning rage loved Steve Harrington, a boy almost 8 years his junior. How come he didn't notice? Steve had quietly snuck into his heart and made a home for himself in it. He

wanted him to be his only, to have Steve lay next to him. Maybe Billy doesn't love him with a passion or close enough to how much Steve loved him but he can see himself getting there. Going from liking him, loving him to completely and utterly in love with him. He could have had him, he could have called Steve his if only he had treated him right and didn't let his fears control him, fuck.

His punches grew faster, harder the skin on his knuckle split open drawing little blood. All the muscles in his arms ached, his fist bruised and there is a high chance Billy had broken a bone or two. He welcomed the pain with open arms, he deserved it, he deserved even worst.

Billy was so scared of getting hurt he ended up not only hurting Steve but himself too. What kind of man was he? What did he turn into? He had stained Steves soul with his sins, he made him unholy. It had started off innocent, he hadn't known Steve, no one did. He was new to this town and was in awe of everything it was adorable. Billy flustered him, intimidated him with his good looks and charming attitude it was amusing to watch him turn into an awkward blushing boy. He was looking for fun and they had some good fun, twice.

Things quickly developed after that, the locals got to know Steve on a level Billy didn't reach. Whisperers of how sweet and genuine Steve has filled the air, the country charm they called it. He helped people a lot, was friendly and babysat some of the kids around here. Sometimes he'll volunteer at the homeless shelter and do some charity. It wasn't all fun then, guilt got into the mix, Steve was a precious little thing, a pretty face with a heart of gold and Billy felt guilty for corrupting him. No matter how good the sex was, how far Billy loses himself in the pleasure every time he comes down from the high he feels disgusted with himself a little.

His hands were bloody and the punching bad had a smug of crimson red on it from the blood on his hands. The pain was intense Billy felt as if his hands are about to fall off. You deserve it, he reminded himself. He was in agony, torturing himself by himself. He had pleaded himself guilty and was now surviving his punishment. Billy's



blows were hard but grew sloppy. Drops of cold sweat drip down his chest and back cutting his flesh open. He was panting angrily trying to get enough oxygen in, to breath. Steve Harrington made him a mess. He used to be angry with the world, now, he's outrageous with world, Steve and himself.

Blood on blood, his first slipped, Billy lost his footing and was falling. He collided with floor face first shaking the universe as his walls trembled down. He didn't move for a while, just stayed on the ground catching his breath trying to calm his racing heart. Suddenly everything was too much, the hushed sounds of his angry panting, his heart slamming into his ribs and the shots of agony travelling through his body. Billy was tired, tired of fighting with himself, denying the truth, he was done with everything.

With a sight, he gets to his feet swaying a little. Once he regained balance he made his way back up. His hands were killing him, he needed to treat them. They're going to hurt like a bitch tomorrow.

In his kitchen there was a bowl of fruit set on the counter, Billy took a hold of it (or tried to, he couldn't close his fists anymore) and turned it upside down letting the fruits fall. Then he went to the freezer and tried opening it, it was a struggle.

"FUCK!" he cried from the pain.

It didn't budge. He tried opening it with his elbow, teeth and back it didn't work. He tried again and again, feeling a great deal of pain every time but nothing did the job. In his frustration, Billy grabbed the handle with all his might and pulled back screaming at the pain. The freezer door swung open and billy quickly picked up the ice tray. Its weight was too much for his injured hands and Billy doped it. Ice cubes scattered on the ground, some even going under the fridge. Billy groaned in annoyance, his day wasn't getting any better. He picked them slowly one by one and putting them into the bowl. When he managed to get them all, Billy buried his hands in it sighing in content as it released him from the pain he was feeling.

He fucked up big time, driving Steve away from him when all the boy ever wanted was to please him. Billy was cold, ruthless and aggressive which made his career choice perfect and his relationships close to none existence. He was a leader, a lover of control and power and that made others fear him and find him unapproachable. He didn't have many friends, he didn't need them (only Sam, who he met in college and now worked for him) and he cut ties with his family except for Max. His love life was without love. Billy had tried dating when he was in high school, didn't work out so he stuck to messing around with people. It wasn't hard finding someone to fuck, especially now since he screamed MONEY.

Thinking about it, had he ever fallen in love? he didn't think so. What is love? To him, love was the soft touch of his mom's, the hushed sounds of her made-up bedtime story and a sweet lullaby sung by the heavens. That was love, his mom. It's the only love he had ever experienced. There was Max too, he would not say that he loved that little bitch but he didn't hate her. They have started off on the wrong foot, both angry and uncooperative to the immense change that happened to their lives they took it out on each other. After a while, when the rage died down, it turns out Max wasn't that much of a pain in the ass, she's really cool and bad ass, Billy liked that about her. Sam was another story, the guy was laid back almost clueless you'd think he was some kind of an idiot, he wasn't Sam was actually smart, can be dead serious if he wants and cunning as hell. Sam was the type to make you do what he wants without you knowing you're profiting him in any way, he could start a war without fingers pointing his way, he was good with people, charming and if Billy was being honest is quite handsome too. He tolerated the man, Billy would go as far as say he semi liked him, he was the only one to keep up with him, he kept things interesting. But to feel love, romantically, he never did. So how was he supposed to know he liked Steve, loves him a little bit?

The ice melted and the blood made the water a light shade of pink. He can't feel his hands anymore, Billy can't tell if it's from the cold or from pain, either way, he's grateful. He takes his hands out of the bowl, drops of water hitting the floor as he made his way to the cabinet taking out a bottle of Vodka. It was new, unopened. Billy took off the lid with his mouth spitting out the plastic circle once it came loose. He took a big gulp setting his throat on fire as it went down. Let's see if can finish it tonight and forget his life forever.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

So, it's not my best work I know. I really struggled with this one, Honestly, I close to quit on it. As you can tell it not as long as my previous chapters, I'm sorry for that. My finals are around the corner, my driving test is coming up and Ramadan just got closer. I might not update for a while, I'm sorry to disappoint you all. I hope you enjoyed this chapter even if it sucked a little, I know some or maybe a lot of you really wanted bits and pieces of Billy's side of the story and as you can tell he's quite an confused asshole.

## 5. Strawberry milkshake, Caramel and Pistachio.

### Notes for the Chapter:

It's been forever I know I'm so sorry! Like I said I've been busy with finals, driving test and getting my license, my graduation and turning 18. Plus I had to apply to university and such, so I've been super busy. To be honest, I did finish those things a while ago, but at the end, I was so tired, and I just couldn't write no matter how much I wanted to. It took me what two months to write this? I had some of it written in between finals which gave me a hard time when I wanted to continue it. The chapter is random I think, funny to some maybe. I'm not sure about it, but I can't keep you all waiting. I'll try writing, but I'm currently on a family vacation in Turkey so I might have some trouble finding time to write or internet to post. I'm sorry!

Steve sat on the cold pavement shivering from the stiff breeze. His teeth chattering as silent tears ran down his cheeks. The night was on the verge of death, killing the warmth of the day and summoning the dead cold. The street was lifeless, abandoned in the dark. It was quiet aside for the restless sound of tree leaves dancing with the wind and flickering lights stuck between life and death.

His ass hurts from sitting on a hard surface for too long, how did he end up on the ground? Steve couldn't remember. One moment he was standing on his two feet watching Billy drive away from him, his car growing smaller and smaller the farther it got till it disappeared. The next he was crumbling down.

He couldn't tell how long had he stayed like this, sitting on the pavement sobbing with his knees pulled to his chest as he tried miserably to fold into himself and disappear. Has it been seconds? Minutes? Hours? Days? Months? Years? Maybe a hundred? A thousand? Even a million? Since the beginning of time until the end of life? Eternity? He wasn't sure.

Steve was lost, what now? Where does he go from here? Nothing made sense; his mind was blank. How did he get here? What happened? What is his next move? Steve knows he should get up and do as he was told, find himself a nice 24-hour diner and send Dustin his location as he waits for him. He was supposed to enjoy a milkshake and clear his mind of Billy as he drinks it. But how can he do that? He was dead, vanquished from existence. He was a man with no purpose thus he was dead. No living man should be purposeless; his father used to say.

He had another out-of-body experience. Steve was hovering above his broken parts as the last string untied, cutting him loose. He was drifting away, dissolving into nothing, useless.

Everything was excellent; he had his whole life ahead of him. Bottles of ink lined up, endless pages waiting to be filled with his achievements and a pen of gold worthy enough to write his legacy. There was so much he was willing to give, a revolution he wanted to start, ideas of a right place, a safe place and enough passion for changing the world. Now, he was stuck on a chapter reliving its horrors with no way over it. His ink had run dry, as hard as a stone. The white pages that were waiting to be filled are now covered with layers of thick dust. Everything ahead became history; his future burned into dust.

Steve's feet were glued to his spot wondering, What now? His dreams turned into nightmares, he lost sight of his goals, and his plans were now illegible. He was lost, stranded in the heart of the earth ready to melt into its core.

Everything seemed meaningless in his eyes. He was so consumed by Billy, drowning in his touch. If Billy were taken away from him, nothing would be left, just a ghost of his past self-hunting him. His thoughts begin and end with Billy. The air he breathes is Billy, everything. What is he now? Nothing.

Steve whipped his eyes furiously making the skin there red and tender. He sighed, he needs to get up and go, but he was terrified of what's next? Is there a next or is this it?

Shit, Steve thinks. He was so confused; he felt so many emotions at once it gave him a headache. He was angry at Billy for not loving him back; you can't force someone to love you; still, he couldn't understand why Billy couldn't love him. It was unfair to him, Steve truly believed it. What did he lack not to be loved by Billy? Was he not good in bed? He can work on it; he can get into whatever kink the man had, fuck, he'll let him do whatever he wanted so that he can love him back. Did he talk too much? Too little? He can stop talking altogether if it helps. Was it the way he dressed? Smelled? Looked? He'll do anything, anything if Billy just said the word.

Steve was angry at himself too. For abandoning his dignity and going as far as bowing to the devil. No matter how much he wanted Billy, he shouldn't forget his self-worth. Anyone would be lucky to have him. He was the full package. Steve was kind and sweet, good looking and had a shit ton of money. Anyone would want that right? In the year he has stayed in California he had both men and women lined up wanting a chance with him, but he was too busy getting to his knees for Billy he turned them down. Was he wrong?

He felt sad as well. Sad because he was insanely in love with Billy as odd as it is when the older man didn't love him the slightest. How depressing is that? He was genuinely crazy; Billy could as well be a stranger from how little he knows about him. Had he lost his goddamn mind? Falling in love from a trace of skin on skin, the feel of Billy's big rough hand on his body and the curves and prints of his fingertips. He fell in love with the ocean in his blue eyes, the mysterious darkness in its depth and hypnotising movements of its waves. Yes, Steve is completely crazy.

With a sight Steve stood up, his feet tingling. Sitting for an extended period made his legs feel numb. He almost lost his balance and fell to the ground, but Steve held on to a streetlight to steady himself. When he was sure he could walk without falling, Steve moved.

His steps were shaky, hesitating not sure where to go or if he even wanted to go anymore. He was not that far from his apartment; it was two steps away. He could go back, start his pity party, drink alcohol till he forgets his name and maybe brake a thing or two. He doesn't have to be out here, on the street where everyone can see that he is broken, regardless of it being empty or not.

Only what good would it do him? Retrieving into his cave, hiding away from people and filling his body with liquor. Eventually, he'll die from alcohol poisoning and be just another one and not someone. Was he going to waste his life away? Yeah, it hurts but this is not the end. Wasn't he already used to abandonment? What was another one to the list? Nothing.

Finally deciding on following Dustin's instructions Steve started walking down the street. His feet moved on their own accord, one foot in front of the other. The distance between his apartment and him grew as his unknown destination became closer. He didn't know where he'd end up and frankly, Steve didn't care. He just wanted to keep going, to keep busy, to have something to do other than think of what happened.

The streets were quiet and empty save for a couple of cars passing him by. It was strange watching traffic lights changing colours, giving permission to proceed saying "Go" to no one, stopping no one just standing there screaming instruction to thin air. It hurts to watch and even more to compare himself to it. In the daylight, when the sun rises everything is different. The streets come back to life. They fill out with people and passing cars. Noise and smell of gasoline filled the air. Now, at night its a ghost town.

After walking for what felt like years, Steve stopped in front of a cosy looking diner called Grannys. He walked in and was hit with the scent of baked goodies. It was a mix of vanilla, coffee and if Steve guessed right cookies. The smell surprised Steve; it was almost 2 A.M. according to the watch hanging on the pastel green wall, what were they baking at this time?

A woman with fair dark skin and short curly hair with a hint of grey was at the counter wiping it. She looked up once he entered briefly, making sure that someone did walk in.

"Welcome to Grannys. Just a moment and I'll be with you." The woman greeted kindly.

Steve nodded even though she couldn't see him. He made his way to a booth in the far end where he had a clear view of the door. Once he was seated, Steve took out his phone and quickly sent Dustin his

current location so he wouldn't forget. After finally sending it, Steve allowed his eyes to scan the diner. It was decorated in pastel colours, green for the walls, light pink almost white for the marble floor and a mixer of blue and yellow booths and tables. The wall behind the counter was filled with hanged frames that continued picture of what Steve assumed are loyal costumers. There were comfortable looking sofas around, a rocking chair too. The place looked like a grandmother house, or at least what he thinks a grandmother house would look like. His grandmother never really liked him, more interested in Elizabeth's (her friend) grandchildren than her own.

The waitress finally made her way to him. Realising that he hasn't read the menu yet he Steve let his eyes run over the words.

"I apologise for the wait. What can I ge-Oh lord, what happened to you?" The waitress, Aaliyah her tag read asked.

"I guess I look as bad as I feel, Huh?" Steve joked despite not being in the spirit; he didn't want to be rude. Besides Aaliyah seemed sweet, he liked the old lady.

"Heavens, no. Let's pray you to feel nothing like how you look, dear." Aaliyah hoped.

"That bad?" Steve wondered scratching his chin. He felt slightly self-conscious at her worried gaze.

"You look allergic to soberness." she teased.

"More like a relationship" He confessed. Steve didn't know why he had said that but it felt both relieving and heartbreaking to admit it in some form.

"Awe got dumbd ?" She questioned.

"I think?" Steve hesitated "I'm not sure, I guess in some way I did the dumbing." he posed, then sighed "It's all so complicated." Steve groaned.

"Everything is, everything is." she agreed. Taking pity on Steve, or



simply being nice Aaliyah offered him a treat. "How about a milkshake, huh? will that make it better, honey?" she asked.

Steve snickered, whats it with people and milkshakes? Did it contain a magical ingredient? Was it some potion? Will it magically heal his heart? Make everything better? Everybody keeps condoling his heart with sweets. Well, at least it's not ice cream and some lousy romance movie. That would have been cliché.

"My friend told me the same exact thing that's why I'm here. He said a milkshake would make it better." He stated, amused.

"Excellent, one milkshake coming right up. What flavour would you like?" She asked.

"Banana, please."

Aaliyah nodded at him, choosing not to write his order down and rely solely on her memory as she walked away with a smile that he returned. His phone vibrated, Dustin sent him a text saying that he was close and Steve better is ready to pay for all the speed tickets he's about to get in the name of friendship. Steve smiled at that.

He tried not to overthink what happened earlier, to push it back to the back of his head and forget that it happened. Except he couldn't. Steve didn't know what possessed him, what power took over him and did that. Had he really said those words? Had he yelled and cried pointing fingers at Billy like it was a game of who to blame? It was his own doing, wasn't it his fault? What was the saying, you made your bed now lay in it? Steve just went and dug in deeper, didn't he?

What a fool, he could have accepted what he got and continued to have Billy warm his bed. But he wouldn't have been satisfied, no, Steve would have wanted more, as he did now. And when he went for it? When he asked for more, it came crashing down.

Asked for more? Thinking about it, Steve didn't ask for anything, did he? He had merely gone and ended things on his own accord

assuming Billy wouldn't want a relationship with him because of a stupid question he asked about love after sex. But Billy's answer was enough and so was his reaction to the breakup if you can call it that. Steve sighed, this was a mess.

Aaliyah emerged from the kitchen with a milkshake in hand and plate in the other. She smiled at him warmly as she made her way to his table. "One banana milkshake." she placed the glass on the table "annnnnd" she dragged the 'n' out "One banana pie on the house." Aaliyah finished cheerfully.

"Thank you." Steve murmured a faint blush covering his cheeks. He wasn't used to people being kind to him for no reason. There was usually something to gain, some hidden intention behind their kindness. So many were the ones who used him for his money, or rather his fathers' money. And so little were the ones who were faithful to him, to his person and his core. Those are the ones he keeps close to him, the ones he grips at hands and teeth.

"You're welcome, honey. Now eat up!" Aaliyah encouraged as she walked away.

Eying the milkshake then the pie, Steve went for the slice of cake first. He embarrassedly moaned at the taste; it was terrific. The crust was a golden delight not brown, on the right side of crunchy and not hard or dry and the bananas were nearly melted, the pie tasted heavenly. Steve took a sip of the milkshake and grimaced in disgust. Steve, as one would say had a love-hate relationship with bananas. He could stomach it in solid form, even loves the fruit but he can't drink it.

He pushed the glass aside to what soon to be Dustin's side of the booth and dug in the pie releasing ridiculous sounds of contentment throughout the entire piece. The cake was mouthwatering; it put Mrs Henderson pies to shame. This Diner is going to be his new favourite place, Steve could tell.

He took another bite and fell in love all over again, this was amazing. Someday I'm is going to marry a pie, Steve thought to himself. What is in this? He wondered. Do they put white vinegar in? Some do for

the crust. Does it have sugar or salt, maybe both? Steve should add baking a pie to his to-do list; it'll be fun and exciting.

"Excuse me, ma'am" Steve called.

Aaliyah was once again behind the counter, this time serving a middle-aged man (who Steve somehow didn't notice entering) some coffee.

"Yes, how can I help you." She asked not approaching Steve. Aaliyah remained where she was fixing dishes.

"Can I get a banana pie to go?" Steve wondered.

"Yes of course. How many slices would you like? two?"

"No, um. I mean, like the whole pie?" He asked dubiously. Do they sell the pie by piece? How the hell was he supposed to know that!

"Oh, silly me. Yes, the whole pie. That may take a while I need to bake one for you. I don't have any at the moment." She apologised.

"Its fine" Steve smiled, he hoped reassuringly "I have nowhere to be."

"One banana pie coming right up!" Aaliyah cheered disappearing into the kitchen.

Steve took his sweet time eating his pie. Enjoying every bite and savouring its sweetness. Its final, Steve has decided. From this moment on, Grannys is going to be his go-to place, his favourite diner and his ticket to stress eating. Oh, the number of pies his going to eat in the name of a broken heart!

"I'll give it about 15 minutes at most, and it'll be done," Aaliyah announced emerging from the kitchen.

"Thanks." Steve smiled.

Aaliyah returned his smile then proceeded to make small talk with

the man sitting on the counter. He heard something about the weather and grandchildren, but Steve didn't pay attention to any of it. His thought rased back to blue eyes and golden hair. A low groan left his lips as he banged his head on the table. *Don't think about Billy!* Steve scolded himself

Determined to stop thinking about Billy Steve sat up straight and took a deep breath leaving his eyes frantically jumping from one object to the other trying to find something that interests him in any way. He counted the lights two times to be sure; the diner had 12. Then, Steve counted the pictures hanging on the wall; there were 23.

The bell above the door rattled as a man, who appeared only to have rolled out of bed and into the diner walked in. He had a thick coat on, a jacket too heavy for the heat wave that's passing L.A. The coat did little to conceal his pyjamas. His face was puffy from sleep, and his eyes were barely opened. The man, who was young but due to tiredness seemed older, almost ancient. Steve couldn't help but stare at him, interested.

"How many did you say you wanted?" he said to whoever was on the other side of the phone. The stranger yawned, rubbed his eyes and stretched. He tiredly asked the other person to repeat what they have just said. How did he make it here in one piece, Steve had no idea. For even if he had walked all the way here instead of driving he was in danger of tripping on his own feet and falling to his death.

"Three?" he asked astonished. The man's eyes widened for a second and for a moment there he looked awake and young, 25? Maybe more but surely not above 30.

There was silence for a moment in which the man was stranded, walking a thin line between boredom and annoyance. He approached Aaliyah who was still behind the counter. He nodded wholeheartedly to the phone as if the other person can see him.

"Honey," he said defeated pulling lightly at his hair in frustration.

"Are you sure?" the man asked concerned.

Steve watched him sympathetically as he pulled his phone away from his ears. The other person, momentarily clear to be the man's significant other was yelling now. He doubted anyone could make out what she was saying, but it doesn't take a genius to know that she wasn't pleased with him the slightest.

"Yes," his lips pressed in a thin line. There was silence once again filled with the man nodding so many times Steve feared his head would be stuck going up and down, up and down again and again.

"I'm sorry." He apologised in a subdued voice, struggling to hide the irritation that was obvious on his face.

"I'll get it, don't worry." He promised her. The man nodded his head twice more before telling the women he loved her and ending the call.

A long and deep sigh left his lips, and Steve didn't blame him. Steve was starting to be concerned for him. The man looked so tired he could drop any moment now and atop that he was struggling to compose himself.

Aaliyah was in front of him in a moment smiling as she did to both Steve and the other man drinking coffee at the counter. The new customer, who although have tried miserably only managed to grimaced at her. Steve winced for his sake, but Aaliyah didn't seem upset by it the smallest instead her smile grew wider.

"What can I get you, dear," she asked him kindly.

"Um, can I get three strawberry milkshake with extra ice cream and," he stopped, took a deep breath and then continued "With caramel and pistachio?"

His face was red by the time he was done and if Steve weren't already feeling bad for him, he would now. Aaliyah didn't frown upon the peculiar order nor did she question it. She merely wrote it down and asked him, in her regular expression and kind voice if he wanted wiped cream on top or not. After getting her answer, she disappeared into the kitchen to prepare the order. The man, on the

other hand, took a seat on the counter and tried to stay awake and not fall asleep on the table.

Steve busied himself with absorbing the man trying his best not to judge the odd order which for him would have been disgusting. He was trying to keep an open mind; people liked different things he understood that. Take Dustin and himself as an example, Dustin liked to dip his eggs with ketchup while Steve couldn't even stomach the sight of the two together. So just like them, some people liked strawberry milkshake with caramel and pistachio. He tried, but the thought of what it might taste like was enough for him to gag.

In fear of being heard Steve buried his face in his folded arms above the table. God, it would have been embarrassing if they had heard him! He couldn't stop himself from wondering what it may taste like? What colour would it be? Strawberries and pistachios were reasonable enough for him, but caramel?

Strange and unpleasant thought filled his head about the odd order that's been recently placed. Those thoughts mixed with the hushed sound of the blender and paper bags lulled Steve to sleep. He wasn't precisely asleep, somewhat in a sleep-like state. He was asleep but somehow aware of what's around him to a degree. He felt the man leave and Aaliyah placing the pie on the table, but he didn't sense that someone was sitting in front of him.

Steve didn't know how long he stayed that way drifting between the lands of dreams and the land of reality in the uncomfortable position he was in. His back hurts, and his arms are now numb from the weight of his head. How much did his head weight? Apparently, it weighs enough to cut his blood circulation.

When he sat up straight, he didn't notice Dustin at first. Steve took his time stretching his limbs and yawning like a lion, with his mouth opened as wide as it could and as loud as he could. It was after he was done and rubbed his eyes a couple of times to wake himself up did he notice Dustin sitting in front of him with his phone out

filming what just happened.

"Dude this is going on story!" He smirked, eyes shining with mischief. Oh, he can't wait for the rest of the party to see it, it was hilarious!

"Dustin!" Steve whined his voice rough with sleep still.

"You should have seen your face. Oh, this was so worth the drive. I'm keeping it forever!" Dustin grinned telling Steve he's going to show it to his children and grandchildren who in their turn are going to show it to his great-grandchildren.

"I hate you." Steve groaned burying his face into his folded arms once again.

"Yeah, yeah. Thanks for the milkshake by the way." Dustin thanked him amused. He knew Steve doesn't drink bananas; he had this weird habit of drinking things but not eating them or the other way around. It was funny to him because if you look into logic, it still tastes the same way, doesn't it?

After a moment of quietness, Dustin continued teasingly "I thought we agreed that you were getting a milkshake?"

"Shut up," Steve grumbled. Right now, his mind was not processing that Dustin has arrived or what's happening around him. He didn't care that his friend was here, or where were they, Steve just wanted to sleep.

"I missed you," He mumbled before closing his eyes and diving into dreamland.